

## Sunnyvale Girls Softball League Field Preparation Guidelines

The following are basic guidelines for field preparation to assist those new to these duties as well as a “refresher” to the veterans of SGSL. A well prepared field presents our players with a safe and quality playing environment. This information is directed toward all age divisions and will identify those differences between each division.

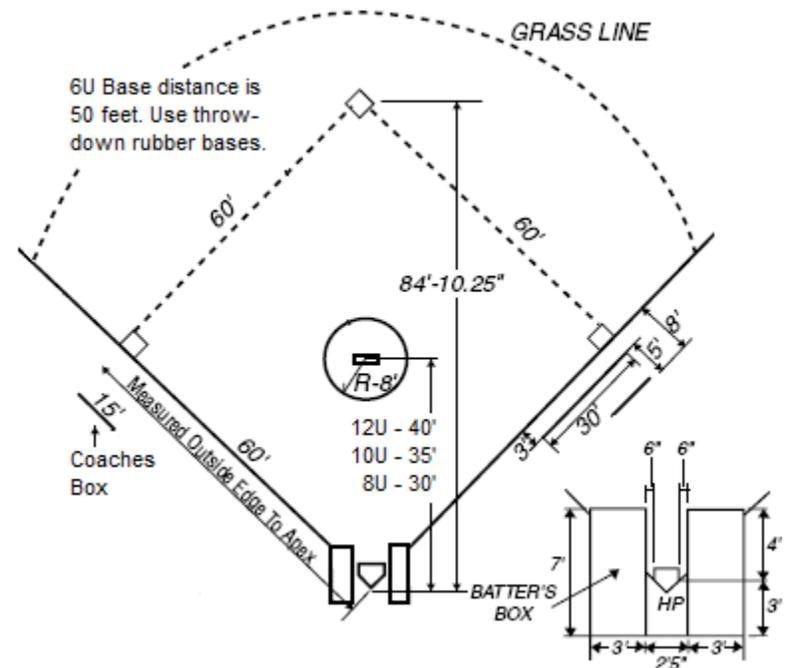
Field preparation ideally involves a minimum of two adults when your team has responsibility as the “home” team. Each team should strive to have volunteers outside the manager and coaches to assist in this endeavor, as they need to focus their time and energy on game days preparing the players for the actual game.

Field preparation should begin a minimum of 45 minutes prior to a game (1 hour is desirable) to ensure that the game is able to begin on time.

### Field Preparation Guidelines

1. The initial focus of field preparation should be on preparing the home plate area. One person should rake the home plate area to provide a level surface (rake material to fill the usual holes in the batters boxes and catchers area). After raking this area, move to the pitchers circle to rake material in to establish a smooth, uniform area in front of the pitching rubber. Tamp with the rake and/or feet to compact the filled area at both the pitchers circle and the batters boxes.
2. One person (two if available – it’s a big job) need to drag the field with the drag mat located in the field equipment shed/box. Initially do the baselines, and home plate areas so that these areas can be “lined” with chalk by others while the rest of the infield is dragged. Always drag baselines parallel to the line – do not drag across the baselines (it smears the chalk). Also, always drag parallel to the grass – never drag into the grass as that creates a “lip” around the field which will cause the ball to jump potentially creating a safety issue for the outfielders.
3. Apply a light spray of water over the entire infield prior to dragging the field (this keeps the lighter Decomposed Granite material – the good stuff – from blowing off the field). A hose spray nozzle is located in each field equipment shed/box. A quick coupling valve for the hose is located at the following locations depending on the field:
  - a. Ortega –by the fence on the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side.
  - b. Stocklmeir –in the grass outfield along the 3<sup>rd</sup> base side.
  - c. SMS – in the grass outfield on the 1<sup>st</sup> base side.
  - d. Las Palmas – in the grass outfield on the 1<sup>st</sup> base side.

4. Chalk the baselines, running lane (down the 1<sup>st</sup> baseline), batter boxes, coaches line, and pitching circle. See diagram below for dimensions.
5. Install the breakaway bases. At SMS, plugs should be removed after dragging the field (don’t forget to replace them after the game – a dig-out tool is in the equipment box if needed). The double base is used for 1<sup>st</sup> base with the orange section going on the outside of the 1<sup>st</sup> baseline. Note the arrow on the top of the single bases that should point to the pitchers circle. First and 3<sup>rd</sup> base peg location can be found by looking on the fence boards for a white hash line which will locate the length from home plate.



Note that the rake can be used for measuring. The rake end of the rake is about 3 feet wide. For the circle, place the rake end on the pitching rubber (~perpendicular to the ground) and drag the end of the handle end on the ground. Drive the chalk with the inside wheels on the line (chalk line will be about 6 inches outside the line drawn with the rake..

### Post Game (Also Post Practice)

At a minimum, quickly rake the home plate area and pitching area to fill in the holes and level. This is very important during the rainy season as it keeps the water from puddling – can make the difference from playing or not playing the next day. Try to leave the field as you would hope to find it before your next game or practice!

