

RSM

21st century approach to Reverse Seasonal Maintenance

BY FLOYD PERRY



tip 1



tip 2



tip 3



tip 4



tip 5

- Tip1** Remove and re-sod infield lips during fall so they are tacked in by spring.
- Tip2** Edge all cool season grass in fall and the border will remain in place.
- Tip3** Repair and re-grade high-stress sections of your pitching mound.
- Tip4** Evaluate your low infield areas in the fall to correct before spring game season.
- Tip5** Fracture clay surfaces and incorporate calcined clay during September.

The major goal of every progressive groundskeeper is to provide all coaches and players with quality playing surfaces and facilities regardless of season or weather. One difficulty that many spring sports teams face early in the season is Mother Nature's inconsistencies. The drastic changes from a week of sunny and clear March temperatures to an overnight drop below freezing can leave 2 inches of white surface moisture on our fields.

No matter how innovative and/or efficient you are, you cannot respond to "24-hour" changes in the weather that affects your building or repairing mounds, incorporating sub-surface calcined clay, or mowing overseeded rye turf.

Let's evaluate a Reverse Seasonal Maintenance (RSM) calendar (for cool-season facilities) and attempt to accomplish a "like" maintenance plan to the one that you achieve with soccer, football, and field hockey fields, by beginning their refurbishments 4 months before the next practice.

Fall sports

March/April/May (3x/week)—First aeration/coring, topdressing, seeding/fertilizing, cross-mowing, and weed/pest evaluation and control.

June/July/August (5x/week)—Second and third aeration (slicing/shattering), spot seeding, fertilizing, consistent irrigation and mowing, weed/pest control.

Sept/Oct/early Nov (3x/week)—Consistent cross-mowing, field line painting, spot fill-in seeding, and leveling the playing surface during weekly game calendar.

After the fall season begins with early practice season being 5 days a week, and home games scheduled 2-3 days a week, most of your maintenance tasks are mowing and painting lines. How about from October 15 to November 15, in about 16 hours a week, work

on your spring sport fields and clay areas during beautiful Indian summer weather?

Spring sports

October-November (2x/week)—Edge clay areas and reduce lip sections. Incorporate calcined clay into infields. Aerate infield, sidelines, and outfields. Fertilize with IBDU fertilizer after aeration for extended fall root growth. Topdress with sandy-loam peat after aerating. Repair your mounds, bullpens and right-handed batter's box. Final drag and final irrigation before shutting down the system for winter.

If you begin your spring sport field refurbishment 4 months before the first practice, as you do for fall sports, then early cold temperatures or excessive spring rain will not hinder your major maintenance tasks. All you will have to handle are the short-term daily preparations or water removal.

Our work schedules are expanding daily along side the practice/game schedules we face. The key to efficiency is staying ahead of the weather radar screen. Our spring sport fields require the same type of care as fall sports, of course. And so once spring sport games begin, it's time for your RSM plan on the fall sport fields.

Progressive grounds crews continuously alter their yearly maintenance calendars so their workload becomes easier to adjust when severe weather hits. Work smarter, not harder to keep Mother Nature in check, and the negative comments of spring sport coaches to a minimum.

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