Here are some tips from the trenches

Mike Boekholder, Indianapolis Indians

Our daily infield maintenance schedule is quite routine. We begin our maintenance by watering the infield quite heavily, almost to the point of puddling, after a game (unless weather dictates otherwise). That way, by morning, the moisture has soaked into the profile deeply and gives us a base of moisture to begin the day with.

First thing in the morning the moisture level of the skin is checked and more water applied if needed. We then roll the sliding pits around the bags as well as the position spots on the infield to firm them up a bit more. The infield is then worked up in two different directions using a 3-foot by 3-foot homemade nail board. After the infield has been spiked, it is mat dragged with a handmade mat drag and the edges are broomed to provide a smooth transition between the infield skin and the turf. We add vitrified or calcined clay every 7-10 days to the infield skin with a drop spreader to keep our 1/4 cushion of conditioner consistent. After games, the entire infield is raked with an infield/bunker rake and then rolled for the evening, after which we apply the post-game water.

Craig Potts, Texas A&M

For our softball field I water the dirt then put a nail drag on the skinned area. After the nail drag I clay the mound and plate area and then tamp those areas. Once I finish the plate and mound areas I level those two places and then pack them with my drag tractor. After this is finished I use my steel mat drag to put the finish drag on the infield. I then water the dirt several more times until right before the game or practice. I then go out and put one more finish drag on the infield to help fluff the calcined clay back to the top. Then I apply one more coat of water. I like to try to keep the infield as moist as possible. We perform daily maintenance on the lips with a broom and wash the lips approximately five times per year so we don't get any build-up of dirt in this area.

SPORTSTURF recently asked several turf managers the following question: What does your infield maintenance plan/schedule consist of?

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