



LUKE YODER, San Diego Padres

For the diagonal checkerboard we mow two different directions during the homestand. When the homestand is over we take the pattern out by mowing against the grain. Sometimes we will turn the groomers on while mowing against the grain to get more aggressive taking it out. Also, sometimes we will verticut against the pattern/grain as

well to try and stand the turf up and go against the grain.

We have to be careful with our bermuda base developing more of a grain than bluegrass. We do not mow fancy patterns or burn anything in too much to avoid the grain developing and causing the ball to snake.

In addition to changing the pattern, mowing against the pattern and verticutting we also top-dress regularly to keep the grain from getting to bad. When we are pushing bermuda during warmer weather we will mow against the pattern and scalp down to 3/8 inch to encourage the bermuda and discourage the rye and also to take the grain out. Our field is Bull's-Eye Bermuda overseeded with perennial rye.

For another slanted or diagonal checkerboard, foul territory is mowed differently. We use two John Deere 260C's to walk mow the infield and foul at 3/4 - 5/8 inch and two John Deere Triplex's 2500B's to mow the outfield at 5/8 - 1/2 inch. We mow every game day for consistency and to clean it up for appearance.



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CHAD LAURIE, Dayton Dragons

I usually like to mow anything that incorporates straight lines. For one, I don't like the fact that when your mowing in circles, most of the weight of the mower will be on the outside tire. Secondly, I think it takes a lot more skill to mow in a straight line than in rounded passes. I switch up the pattern every homestand, and usually mow in two directions. I alternate everyday which direction I'm going. For instance, if I am mowing parallel to the foul lines, the first day I will mow the first base foul line, and the second day I will mow the third base foul line. This prevents the grass from laying over too much. I always switch the pattern every homestand to prevent the same thing.

In between homestands, I will usually mow along the back arc of the clay. This pattern will usually go across most patterns and is a way to stand the grass back up. As for equipment, I use a Toro Reelmaster 3100-D for both the infield and outfield.



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**CHERYL MILLER,
Little League
International**

I try to stick to the basics when it comes to putting down a pattern. Since I'm dealing with a field much smaller than others, I think the more complicated patterns look busy and cluttered. So, I prefer to use the more common diamonds, checkers, etc. I'll start from the inside of the field and work out, going over any lines that are not perfect in my eyes. For my first line I'll pick something in the outfield and focus on that. Once I get that down I can usually keep everything straight from that point on. Having professional mowers really makes a difference as well. Here at Little League International, I use a Toro Groundsmaster 3505-D in the outfield and Hayter Harrier 56 for the infield and wing areas. These mowers make my job so much easier. I can sit back, enjoy mowing and have fun doing it.



Having professional mowers really makes a difference as well.

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JOEY STEVENSON, Indianapolis Indians

When we decide on a mowing pattern we want something that looks pleasing but also will perform well and not damage the turf. We have four people working here during the day, so we can't spend hours and hours on mowing patterns; we'd prefer to spend most of our time on getting the skin ready and the field in good shape

rather than mowing unnecessary patterns. The less mower abrasiveness and compaction, I feel our wear areas and edges will perform better.

The pattern that took us the longest to "lay out" was the sunrise pattern. In that case we brought out a laser and shot every 10 degrees off the foul line and stretched a string line out and mowed along the line and then basically filled in the lines to correspond the light/dark pattern look.

The other patterns were just done by getting out there and mowing. Between me and my assistant we have 20 years experience in mowing fields and straight lines. We pick a spot on the outfield wall and drive toward it. It usually takes us about 3 days to get a pattern burned for the upcoming homestand. In most cases our interns our mowing while my assistant and I are working on mounds, plates, and skinned area, so our patterns usually aren't complex but they are precise and look sharp.

We use a Toro Sidewinder reel mower.



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MATT NERI, State College (PA) Spikes

As far as deciding on what pattern to mow, we usually consider two factors. First how long will it take to mow? Unfortunately we only have one mower and a limited staff so we really can't afford to spend all morning mowing when there are so many other things that need to be addressed.

Secondly, how will the pattern affect the play of the ball? Occasionally I'll go out during batting practice to shag balls in the outfield. I've witnessed first hand how certain patterns can send a ball snaking through the outfield. We try to stick with straight lines and avoid any circles or turns when mowing a pattern.

We usually will lay string lines the first time we mow a new pattern to ensure that we are mowing in a straight line. We also used string lines to create the giant star pattern. Once we had the star outlined with the strings we painted small marks along the line with turf paint. This allowed us to pull the string lines up and still have a template to follow.

As far as equipment goes, we use a Jacobsen Tri-King 1900D. ■



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