# **Field Maintenance & Usage Guidelines**

Our natural baseball/softball fields are a valuable resource. To keep them in optimal playing condition, it’s crucial that we avoid using them when they are wet or muddy. Staying off the fields during these conditions allows them to dry properly, ensuring safety and longevity for all our programs.

## **Field Drying Methods:**

* **Raking and Nail Dragging:**  
  When the field is in a suitable condition, our field crew will **rake,** or **nail drag** the surface. This process opens up the dirt, enhancing air circulation and expediting the drying process.
* **Weather Considerations:**  
  The effectiveness of drying largely depends on natural factors such as **sunlight, temperature, and wind speeds**. Favorable weather conditions can significantly shorten the drying time.
* **Time and Patience:**  
  Drying is a gradual process. The more we refrain from using the field when it’s wet, the faster and more evenly it will dry. Patience is essential to preserve the quality of the playing surface.

## **Communication Protocols:**

* **Proactive Updates:**  
  I will strive to communicate promptly when fields are deemed unusable for practice. These updates are intended to keep everyone informed and ensure that practices are held in safe, optimal conditions.
* **Weekend Practices:**  
  Conditions on weekends can be challenging to monitor as I may not always be available. If you suspect your field is questionable due to wet conditions, it’s important that you inspect the field personally.
* **Personal Responsibility:**  
  Even with regular communications, each team must take responsibility for checking their field. If you notice signs of saturation or excessive mud, please consider the field unfit for practice and refrain from using it.

## **How to Assess if Your Field is Too Wet for Practice:**

When determining whether a field is safe for use, watch for these signs:

* **Excessive Mud:**  
  The ground is visibly muddy, soft, or sloughing off underfoot, indicating that it cannot support normal activity.
* **Water Accumulation:**  
  Presence of puddles or standing water on the field, which could lead to slippery or unstable playing conditions.
* **Saturated Dirt:**  
  The soil appears dark and overly saturated, suggesting that it has absorbed too much moisture.
* **Visible Surface Damage:**  
  Look for large ruts, tire tracks, or other disturbances that indicate the field has been compromised by previous use on wet ground.
* **Unsafe Texture:**  
  If the field feels slick or unstable when walked upon, it’s a sign that it may not be ready for practice.