

# Pointers For Parents

## Rescuing Diamonds From The Rough

(NAPSA)—Before kids can break out their gloves and batting helmets for baseball and softball leagues this summer, it's increasingly important to ensure the fields on which they are practicing and playing are safe. Each year, thousands of children suffer injuries as a result of bad ball hops or uneven turf, and proper field maintenance is the best method of minimizing the risk of such injuries.

The annual process of making local ball fields safe and playable is no easy task—and one that often falls on the shoulders of parents and volunteers. That's why sports field conditioner manufacturer Turface Athletics™ has partnered with the American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA); PONY™ Baseball and Softball; DryJect® Aeration; and Momentum Media to launch the Keep America Playing® Tour.

The Keep America Playing tour is a nationwide field education program that gives those responsible for sports field maintenance the resources and knowledge they need to keep fields safe, playable and in peak condition. Regular field maintenance can help remove lips that cause bad hops; minimize rainouts by managing moisture; and create an even and level surface on both the skinned infield and the turf. The Keep America Playing Web site—[www.keepamericaplaying.com](http://www.keepamericaplaying.com)—offers comprehensive resources and information on when, why and how to best care for sports fields, with information geared specifically toward facilities with limited maintenance budgets.

To get started for the season, Keep America Playing recommends the following:

**1. Make Contact**—First, place a call to the school or parks department to determine who's responsible for maintenance, what the plans are for spring mainte-



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nance, what equipment is available, and how willing they are to accept volunteer assistance. Next, call the rest of the team and have them reserve a time to help.

**2. Come Prepared**—Asking a dozen parents to take time out of a weekend for manual labor is significant, so a plan should be in place to make the most of their time. The Field Education section of [www.keepamericaplaying.com](http://www.keepamericaplaying.com) has maintenance tips and a checklist of spring conditioning steps that can assist in the development of such a plan.

**3. Bring the Tools**—Most parks have the equipment to maintain sports fields. If not, be prepared to bring shovels and rakes. Also, be sure to have a supply of infield conditioner, such as Turface® MVP® or Pro League® to skin the surface of the base paths once holes have been filled in. This helps to create a consistent playing surface, provides better traction for players and helps the field drain more quickly.

**4. Have Fun**—Sure, field maintenance is hard work. Sodas and pizza will make the work a little easier, and are great rewards for a job well done.

For additional advice on how to maintain and improve the safety and playability of baseball and other sports fields, visit [www.keepamericaplaying.com/fieldeducation](http://www.keepamericaplaying.com/fieldeducation).