

WEST VALLEY GIRLS SOFTBALL FIELD MAINTENANCE DRAG GUIDELINES

Avoid the "outward swirl"...

A common pattern that seems logical turns out to be the worst pattern you can use.

We're talking about the "outward swirl". Start in the middle and move outward in a reverse swirl toward your turf grass, right?

This pattern pulls soil from the center of your fully skinned infield — the peak of your crown — and deposits it on the outer portions of the infield. Taking away the crown robs your infield of its slope which interferes with drainage. There are several other options that can be beneficial, including ...



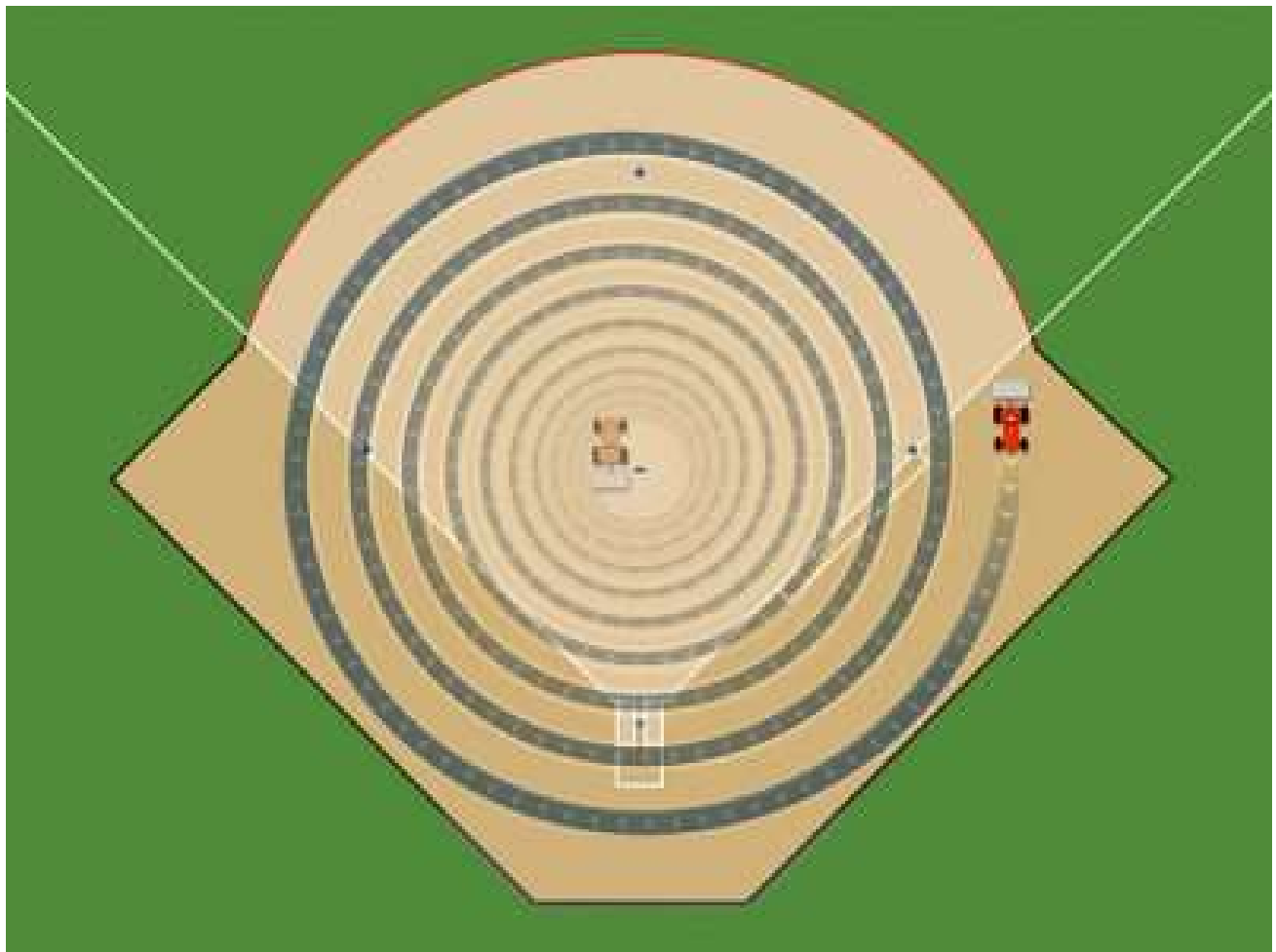
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The "inward swirl"...

Same idea, but with much better results.

Unlike the outward pattern, the inward swirl is a “building pattern” that can actually help retain or build up the crown of your infield.

Use the clock face to set a different starting location each day. Start your drag on the edge of the infield skin and work your way inward, ending somewhere around the middle of the infield. The drag loads up with material on the outside and leaves it in the center when you’re done. This helps maintain proper surface grade and drainage.



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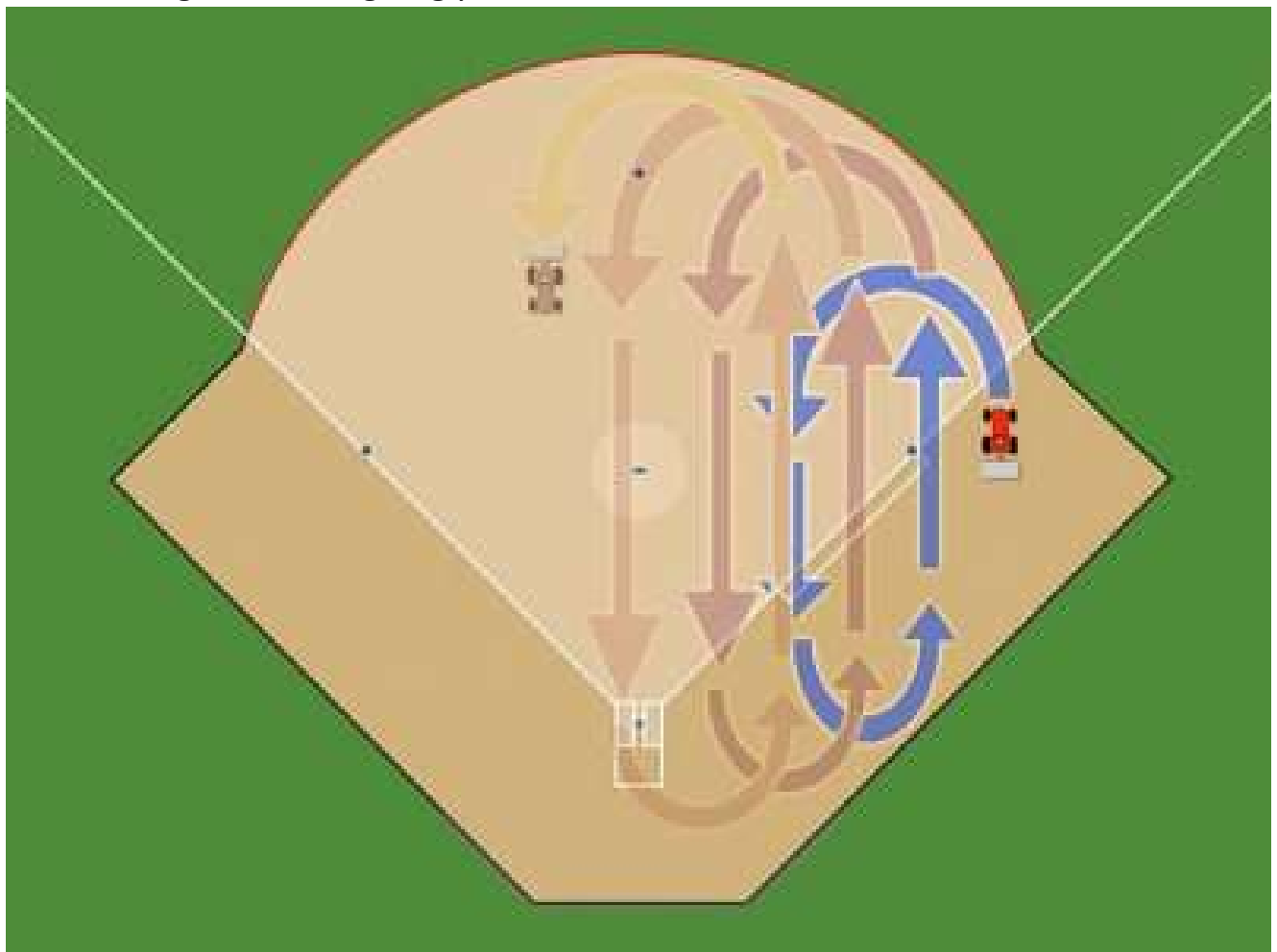
Overlapping ovals, working your way inward...

Another effective pattern for fully skinned infields is overlapping ovals.

Like the pattern used with a grass infield, envision the face of a clock on your infield to determine your starting point on the outer edges.

The next day, rotate your pattern starting with a different spot on the “clock”... for instance, if Day 1 you started at 3 o’clock, then you should have worked your way across the infield with overlapping ovals toward 9 o’clock. Then the next day, you would begin at 5 o’clock and work across the infield to 11 o’clock, and so on.

No matter what starting point you have and how you are rotating around the “clock” always finish around the center of your infield to help bring material back to the top of the crown. By rotating the orientation of this pattern, you will be cross-cutting each time, giving you a nice smooth surface with a reinforced crown.



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Remember to clean up after dragging...

A byproduct of dragging with a steel mat drag is the collection of “spoils”, or waste materials. When you finish dragging, these spoils are left behind and need to be removed from your infield.

Dragging is a great way to collect up small stones and large clumps that will find their way onto your infield. Pick up the waste and then level the remaining clean soil with a field rake or level board.

Don't forget to water the infield skin it helps keep the surface in the best condition possible for playability and safety!

