



Breakaway Bases (Baseball & Softball)

Frequently Asked Question

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Is a town required to install break-away bases on all baseball and softball fields?

More than 40 million Americans participate in recreational softball leagues. Another three million play Little League, high school and college baseball. Softball and baseball are our nation's leading sports and also the leading cause of all recreational sports injuries.



Most of these injuries occur when players slide into bases. Recreational softball players sustain more than 1.7 million base-sliding injuries a year, 360,000 of them serious enough to require hospital emergency room treatment. Medical treatment for these injuries costs the public \$2.1 billion annually. This does not include the costs due to lost work time, restriction of future athletic activities, permanent impairment, and escalating insurance premiums for the injured player, his or her employer, the field owner, and the softball or baseball league.

Traditional 'stationary' bases are bolted into concrete and take about 3500 foot-pounds of force to dislodge. Breakaway bases, on the other hand, have tops with molded grommets, which snap together when stamped on from above, much like a "Lego" toy. Though largely immovable, they will break apart under a force of about 700 foot-pounds.

Rule 1.06 of the **2006 Little League Baseball and Softball rule books** states:

".. Beginning with the 2008 season, it will become mandatory that all leagues utilize bases that disengage their anchor. Leagues are encouraged to begin the process of implementing these types of base systems during the current season on all their fields so that the process is completed promptly."

Overall statistics reveal injury rates per 100 games at 7.2 for stationary bases, 0.2-0.3 for breakaway bases. Health care costs plummeted along with injury.

The switching from immovable, 'stationary' bases to new pop-off 'breakaway' models brought about "a 96% reduction in (player) injuries" during recent trials, according to Dr. David Janda, Director of the Institute for Preventive Sports Medicine at Ann Arbor's University of Michigan Medical School.

About 10% of all fields in the country now use breakaway bases. The Federal government has already mandated the bases for use on all prison and military baseball diamonds.

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