

Get Stains Out of Sports Uniforms like a Pro

By Charlene Prince Birkeland, Team Mom | Team Mom – Fri, 27 Apr, 2012 6:37 PM EDT



Scores the winning run! Oh my, the dirt!

It's a proud moment as parents watch their kids take the field in their crisp, clean uniforms during Little League season. Baseballs are hit, bases stolen, and runs scored. And then parental pride turns to wonder, as in: "How are we *ever* going to get those grass and dirt stains out of that uniform?" With youth baseball pants ranging in price from \$15-\$50, mom and dad have good reason to want to preserve those uniforms for a full season.

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Nate Alleyne, the clubhouse manager for the **San Jose Giants**, spends more than 300 hours a season doing laundry for the **minor league team** of the San Francisco

Giants. He also tackles the wash for the visiting teams -- and the umpires -- and sees a cacophony of colorful stains that include dirt, clay and blood. "The toughest stains are grass stains. When the players slide on the grass, it's the worst. You'd think it's the darker clay and dirt, but those stains come out easier than grass stains," Alleyne tells Team Mom on Shine.

How does this laundry pro get everyone's uniforms looking sharp every single day? Elbow grease. "The best thing I found that works is scrubbing the heck out of it," he says. "I soak [the uniforms] in hot water with stain release, but nothing really beats hard work and scrubbing the stains out." So if you're looking for help in cleaning your child's sports uniforms, your first step is to buy a good scrub brush that you can use on clothing.

Whether it's a baseball, football, soccer or lacrosse, you can follow Alleyne's simple -- and proven -- approach to clean up your kid's sports uniforms:

1. Pretreat the stains with your product of choice, such as OxiClean or Shout! Alleyne says that he hasn't found a product that definitively gets stains out, so use what works for you.
2. Soak the clothing for 60-90 minutes in the hottest water possible. "It's definitely a waiting game," says Alleyne.
3. Remove the clothes from the water and, as Alleyne says, scrub the heck out the stains with a scrub brush. You'll want one with strong bristles and a non-slip handle that you can easily grip.
4. Wash the clothing in hot water **with your favorite laundry detergent**. While Alleyne does add TideBoost to the wash, he does *not* use bleach because it fades the piping on the team's uniforms. But if your kid's uniform bottoms are all white, you could add bleach at this stage.
5. If you aren't happy with the results, go back to step one. Once you dry the clothing, the stains set in and will be virtually impossible to remove. Ever.
6. Once the stains are removed to your satisfaction, toss the clothes in the dryer.

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