



Sports & Barrier Netting Systems  
Built Gorilla Strong.™

# Baseball Backstop Netting Buyer's Guide

---

*Built Gorilla Strong.™*

**gorillanetting.com**

*By Dolvin Todd, President — Gorilla Netting LLC*

1-800-274-1079

# Baseball Backstop Netting: The Complete Buyer's Guide

---

*A backstop netting system is one of the highest-liability installations at any ball field. Get the height wrong, the material wrong, or the engineering wrong, and you are exposing spectators, vehicles, and adjacent property to foul balls traveling 90+ mph. This guide covers what you need to know before you buy.*

## How Tall Should Backstop Netting Be?

Minimum recommended height is 30 feet above field grade for baseball and 25 feet for softball. These are baseline recommendations from industry netting designers and engineers — your actual height requirements may be higher depending on seating layout, proximity to parking, and local regulations.

For fields with seating directly behind home plate, many facility managers spec 35–40 feet. MLB extended netting to the foul poles starting in 2020, and that standard is filtering down to college, municipal, and travel ball facilities.

## Backstop System Types: Tie-Back vs. In-Line

There are two primary structural configurations for backstop netting systems. Each has trade-offs.

### ***Tie-Back Systems***

Poles are offset behind the seating area, and cables run from the pole tops forward over the spectators. This keeps poles out of sightlines and creates a fan-friendly experience. Tie-back systems are the standard for facilities that prioritize spectator experience — college stadiums, travel ball complexes, and municipal fields with grandstands.

### ***In-Line Systems***

Poles are set directly in line with the netting plane. More economical for new construction where seating layout is still flexible. Simpler engineering, lower cost, but poles are visible from the stands.

## Pole Mounting: Direct-Bury vs. Baseplate

Direct-bury poles are set directly into the ground with concrete backfill. Best for systems under 30 feet — straightforward installation, lower cost. Baseplate-mounted poles bolt to engineered concrete foundations. Required for systems 30 feet and taller, and for any installation where soil conditions are poor or where the system needs to be removable.



Pole sizes for backstops are typically 8-inch, 10-inch, or 12-inch OD depending on height and span. Larger poles handle greater wind loads and longer cable spans.

## Netting Materials for Backstops

Material choice depends on your budget, the level of play, and how much you care about sightlines. Here are the four options that matter:

Material	Tensile Strength	Best For	Key Trait
#36 Black Twisted Knotted Nylon (1-3/4" mesh)	350 lb	Industry standard backstops	Proven durability, good impact absorption
#72 Nylon	High (doubled gauge)	High-impact zones	Maximum abrasion resistance
#18 HMWPE / Dyneema (410 lb tensile)	410 lb	MLB and NCAA-grade systems	Best sightlines, thin profile, near-invisible
Kevlar #12 (NFPA 701 flame-rated)	292 lb	Professional arenas	Flame-rated, indoor/outdoor versatility

For most municipal and travel ball fields, #36 black twisted knotted nylon with 1-3/4-inch mesh is the industry standard. It handles repeated foul ball impact at 350 lb tensile strength and lasts 10+ years with proper maintenance.

For premium facilities where sightlines matter — college stadiums, minor league parks — #18 HMWPE (Dyneema) is the move. At 410 lb tensile strength with a thread profile thin enough to nearly disappear from 50 feet away, it is what MLB and NCAA programs use.

## Cable Specifications and Netting Support

Cables are the structural backbone of any netting system. Upper support cables must have a minimum 3,000 lb bursting strength. Netting should be supported every 1,300 square feet — exceed that, and the netting sags, creating pockets where balls collect and stress concentrates.

## Ground Clearance and the Skirt Option

The bottom of the netting should not touch the ground on natural surfaces like grass or clay. Ground contact leads to damage from maintenance equipment (mowers, tractors) and animals. A 6–12 inch gap above grade is standard for natural surfaces.

On concrete, netting can be attached directly using hardware flush to the ground — this is an acceptable and common configuration.

Where full ground-level coverage is needed without direct attachment on natural surfaces, Gorilla Netting offers a skirt system. The netting terminates at a bottom cable above grade, and an extra 1–2 feet of netting extends below the cable, weighted down by a lead-core rope that holds it flat on the ground. The skirt provides the appearance and function of ground-level containment while keeping the primary netting off the soil. The skirt must be lifted during ground maintenance and lowered afterward.

## What Does the Netting Attach To?

Backstop netting works with several base structures:

- **Behind the fence** — The engineered best practice is to set the netting system behind the chain-link fence with the bottom of the netting 1–2 feet below the top of the fence line. This prevents balls from slipping through the gap while protecting the fence itself. Attaching netting directly to a chain-link fence transfers wind load into the fence structure, which can bend posts and support pipe and compromise the fence's structural integrity over time.
- **Concrete or CMU wall** — Found at colleges and professional facilities. Clean look, durable base.
- **Modular backstop wall** — Newer prefab systems that combine padding, structure, and netting attachment points.

## 4 Questions to Answer Before You Buy Backstop Netting

- **1. What is the level of play?** Youth league, travel ball, college, or professional? This determines material grade and height requirements.
- **2. Where are the spectators?** Seating layout drives system type (tie-back vs. in-line) and minimum height.
- **3. What is the soil like?** Sandy, rocky, high water table? Soil conditions affect foundation design and cost.
- **4. Do you need engineering?** Systems 30+ feet typically require stamped engineering drawings. Factor in 3–4 weeks for engineering as part of your project timeline.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: How tall should backstop netting be for baseball?**

A: Minimum 30 feet above field grade. Many facilities spec 35–40 feet when seating is directly behind home plate. Height depends on seating layout and proximity to parking or roads.

### **Q: What is the best netting material for a backstop?**



A: #36 black twisted knotted nylon (1-3/4" mesh) is the industry standard — 350 lb tensile strength, proven durability. For premium sightlines, #18 HMWPE (Dyneema) at 410 lb tensile is the professional choice.

**Q: How much does backstop netting cost?**

A: Cost depends on height, pole count, span, mounting type (direct-bury vs. baseplate), material choice, and site conditions. There is no standard price — a site assessment is needed for an accurate quote.

**Q: Should backstop netting touch the ground?**

A: On grass or clay, no — maintain a 6–12 inch gap to prevent damage from mowers and animals. On concrete, netting can be attached flush to the surface with appropriate hardware. For natural ground surfaces where full coverage is needed, Gorilla Netting offers a skirt system using a weighted lead-core rope that lays flat on the ground and can be raised during maintenance.

**Q: What cable specs should a backstop system use?**

A: Upper support cables need a minimum 3,000 lb bursting strength. Netting should be supported every 1,300 square feet to prevent sagging and stress concentration.

**Need backstop netting for your field?**

Gorilla Netting has installed backstop systems for municipal fields, universities, and private sport facilities across all 50 states. Every installation is backed by a 5-year warranty. Call

**1-800-274-1079** or visit [gorillanetting.com/get-quote](https://gorillanetting.com/get-quote).