

Top **5** Painting Recommendations, Part 1



We asked several top turf managers for their "Top 5" recommendations when it comes to painting or marking their football fields. We'll share some this month and the rest in the August issue:

Five P's to Proper Painting

1. Plan out the job.

- Make sure all equipment, materials, supplies are on hand
- Schedule the days and times based on time of year (frost, rain, snow, day-length, drying time) and scheduled games/events.
- Make sure enough people are scheduled and trained to perform the job in a timely manner.
- Have stencils made and on hand for quick, professional logo and decoration painting.

2. Prepare the surface

- A good paint job is further enhanced with an aesthetically pleasing surface (clean, level and uniform green color)
- For natural grass fields good agronomics promote good footing (soil stability and paint longevity), level surface (proper mowing practices), and uniform color (proper fertility and irrigation).
- Set "benchmarks" around the perimeter of the playing field to eliminate the need to measure each time. Football "layout" sets are available from industry suppliers or you can make your own



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(for natural grass fields benchmarks can be 6-inch nails punched through a folded brightly colored ribbon and driven into the ground along the sidelines and backlines). Stretching a string from one nail to the other located across the field will provide each 5-yard line while a string stretched from one endline to the other will provide the top/bottom of the numbers and hashmark locations. The head of the nail should at least 1/2 inch below the soil surface and should not be placed within the actual playing field for safety reasons.

- When measuring for field lines or setting benchmarks always use a steel tape measure to minimize any tape stretching for more accurate measurements.

3. Proper paints and paint mixing

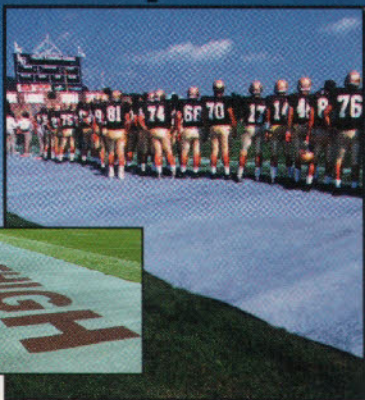
- Use paint made for natural turfgrass or synthetic surfaces (they are different).
- Mixing area should be in a safe and convenient location (paint and mixed paint

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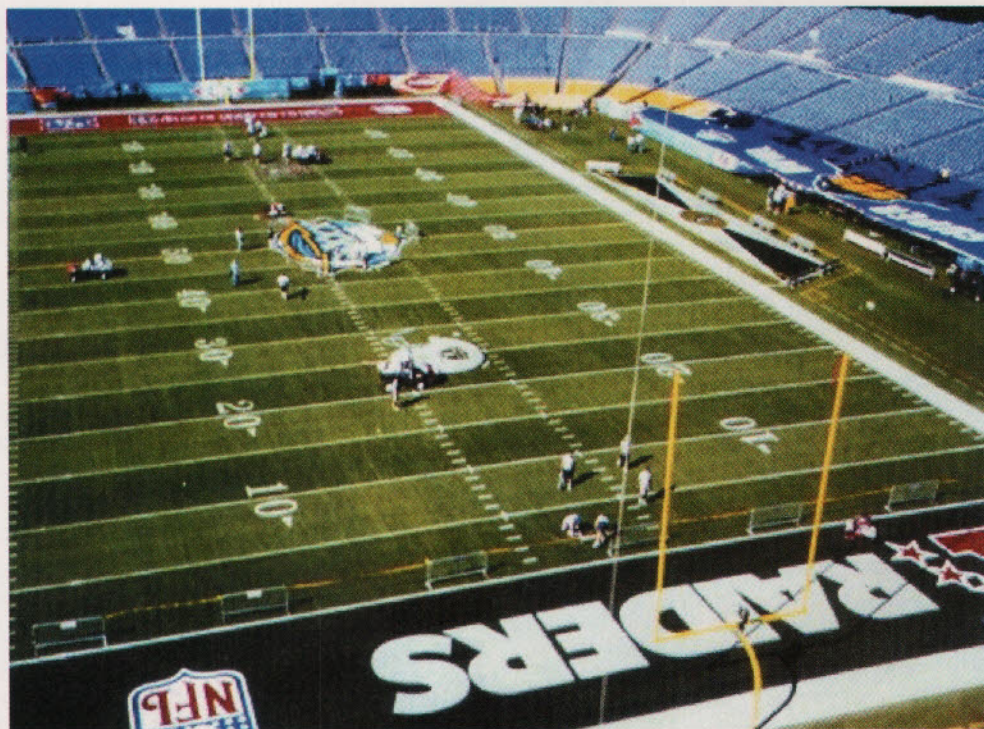
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are not allowed into a storm drain; mixing area should be close to the field).

- Mix paint at 1:1 ratio for first application then 3:1 or 4:1 (water:paint) for second coat or touchups.

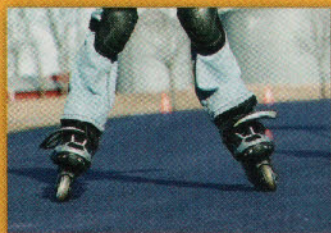
4. Painting

- Use templates, stencils, paint-lining machines, and stringlines for quick professional results.
- Use paint machines that provide a uniform spray at various pressures ("airless" paint machines work very well).
- Use paint machines that are equipped with a hose, gun, and wand for logo and decoration painting.
- Use the least amount of paint possible to adequately cover the surface (paint only the leaf tissue not the soil underneath; proper mixing and spray pressure are key).
- When spray painting a large area in a back-and-forth motion always stop and start the spray gun with each change of direction to avoid excess paint at that point.



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- To prevent overspray, use "splash boards" (1/2-inch plywood cut 30 inches high x 60 inches long, or so, with handles) and small "bender boards" (masonite or thin plywood/plastic cut 6 inches high x 12-36 inches long, or so, for curves and small logo areas).
- Paint all areas that have the same color then clean machine and change colors.
- Small logos and detail areas can be painted with a pump-up sprayer, brushes, or rollers.
- Always have a bucket of clean warm water and some rags handy for any "oops" that occur.
- Begin the paint job with enough time to complete the task and end the paint job with enough drying time before field activity.
- Always cleanup after each painting day; the paint job is not complete until all equipment and paint area are thoroughly cleaned and all materials are properly stored.

5. Pocket Plan B

- Have a contingency plan for painting in case of bad weather or severe seasonal conditions

(frost, rain, heavy snow, high winds may delay scheduled painting days/start times).

- Unscheduled practices/events may cause the painting job to be done in parts or more than once before the game.

Steve Wightman, Stadium/Field Manager, Qualcomm Stadium, San Diego.

Tips from Tennessee

1. Use a good quality paint that is manufactured for use on turf and mix it well. We mix 10 gallons of paint at a time with the proper amount of water in a large trash barrel with a water faucet installed at the bottom of the barrel. To mix the paint use a large electric drill with a mixing blade. Finally, be sure to strain the paint as you fill your paint machine.
2. Use good string and stretch as tight as you can. Then tighten it some more.
3. Purchase or construct your own stencils for numbers, hashmarks, etc. Our number stencils are constructed from plywood with an

old aluminum seat board used as a frame.

4. Use a good paint machine. We are currently using airless paint machines that work well both for lines and stencil work.
5. When finished be sure to clean paint machine well.
6. Paint the grass not the ground!

Bob Campbell, CSFM, Director, Grounds/Maintenance, University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Lessons from Leonard

1. Keep markings fresh, bold, and bright. Paint will draw attention away from parts of your field that may not look so good. I think all of us at one time or another thought our fields may not look as good as we want them to, but as soon as you get the paint down, presto! Trimming around numbers and the 20's and 50-yard lines in your school or teams colors will go a long way with administration. It really pops the white and shows up great from the stands.



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2. Don't paint too early. I know weather, event schedule, and manpower will dictate when you can paint, but for big events, always try to paint within 48 hours of your event. Most paint will stay fresh within that time.
3. Use stencils, boards, and strings whenever possible. We use string lines every time we paint our lines and hash board and number stencils whenever we have the manpower or time. Keeping lines and stencils straight and crisp will be well received by all. Use boards to block wind to avoid overspray. Simple plywood or a sheet of insulation works well for this. For media lines, make a stencil for the first time. They are easy to use and are a sure way to make sure your marks are accurate.
4. More is not always better.
Typically, for white paint, we use a base coat of a 1:1 ratio of water to paint. After that, we back off the paint to a 2:1 ratio of water to paint. This allows the grass to survive after numerous paintings, especially



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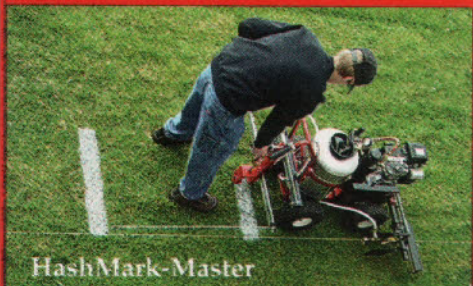


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through the football season, and still gives us a bold white mark. With colors, experiment with different ratios. For some darker colors, you will find that you may add more water than some of the lighter colors and still get the same quality. This will depend on the paint manufacturer.

5. Keep lines straight with mowers.

One of our biggest challenges is keeping our lines straight while trying to burn in mowing patterns for aesthetics. With Kentucky bluegrass at 1 1/4 inches, the lines will push depending on the mowing pattern, which for us, is parallel to the 5-yd lines. This results in pushing the side-lines and in our grid, where we have painted 15 x 15-foot boxes, pushes the line you mow across. A pushed line will draw attention to the line and your crew's painting ability. Use the mower to go against

the grain to push the line back. Of course, the next time you paint the line will be straight, but may get pushed again. Monitor this before anyone else catches it.

6. Choose the right paint machine.

We are always asked what type of paint machine we use. We use Graco painters because they work best for us and what we are trying to achieve. For your facility, you may find another machine or method works better. Know what type of paint you will be using, whether it's aerosol or out of a bucket, know what type of painting needs to be done and in what time frame, and of course, how much money you can spend.

Demo paint machines or just stick with what you know works! ■

Tony Leonard, Sports Field Manager, Philadelphia Eagles.

product spotlight

New fungicide

FMC announces EPA registration of Segway fungicide for turf management. Segway offers immediate and season-long control of pythium diseases such as Pythium blight, Pythium root dysfunction and Pythium damping. It has no known disease resistance, making it a foundation for a disease management program that includes other labeled fungicides with different modes of action.

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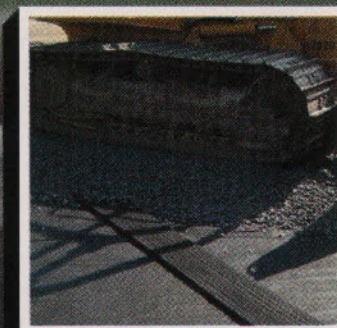
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