

# Paint buildup removal tips



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**H**ere are some tips from your peers on preventing or removing built-up paint from your fields:

“My favorite method is to aggressively verticut the heavy paint areas including the lines,” says Jon DeWitt, athletic fields manager at Georgia Tech. “This activity really sprays the old paint out of the thatch layer. Aerating the endzones and logos is also good at breaking up the paint, but verticutting disrupts much more surface area.”

“I try to paint our fields about once a week. This may change a bit depending on turf growth rate, rainfall, and game schedule, but if the turf is growing well, I won’t end up with much paint buildup from one painting to the next,” says Andrew Gossel, athletic director for Covenant Christian HS in Indianapolis. “I use a line mower to cut the areas for the lines about 1/2 inch lower than the rest of the turf. Since the turf is lower, it helps give me a quality line without having to heavily coat the longer blades of turf with so much paint. It also helps save money since I won’t use as much paint, and also helps keep me on my 1x/week paint schedule.

“If I am mowing the entire field 2-3 times per week and not using the line mower, I would be cutting a lot of paint turf off each cutting, thereby making it necessary to paint more often. I also make sure I use a quality paint to help ensure not having to re-paint so often. I try not to apply heavy coats of paint; I am careful about corners where two lines meet to not apply several coats,” Gossel says.

“It is pretty simple – we try not to paint anymore than we have to,” says Herb Combs, assistant athletic groundskeeper at Penn State. “We like to make sure the stadium is bright for game weeks so we will paint the field twice that week, once at the beginning and then once at the end, weather depending. When the team is away for the week we might only paint once to keep the lines visible or depending upon the time of year we might not paint at all and let the paint lines grow out.

“Our only real trouble area is our blue borders around the numbers and the ‘Penn State’ in the endzones. The color of the paint draws the sun to it and thins the turf as the season goes on, so we try to only single coat that once we get a good base coat down,” says Combs.

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