

# Tips for painting synthetic turf fields

TECHNIQUES for painting synthetic turf fields are very similar to painting natural grass but there are a few important points to always keep in mind. By using the following four rules, application and removal of synthetic turf paint will be much easier:

## 1. Groom the field

It is important that you groom your field and remove excess debris before painting. This includes removing any remaining old paint. This will provide the new paint with the best surface so it can properly adhere to the turf blades. Grooming makes the individual

fibers stand tall. This allows the entire blade to be painted. If the blades are matted down, only one side will be painted and it will affect the "pop" the paint gives spectators.

## 2. Avoid painting the field when it is wet

It is important that the surface of your field has had the opportunity to properly air out after a morning dew or rain storm. If necessary, dry the field with a backpack blower or fans. Wet artificial turf poses a problem because it will not allow the paint to properly cure. The bond between the paint and the blade will be

weak and will not hold up well to game day use. The optimum condition for painting synthetic turf is warm and dry.

## 3. Paint infill systems with an airless sprayer

The goal of painting synthetic turf systems is to use as little paint as necessary and to keep the paint out of any infill material. Airless machines set below 1100 psi atomize the paint at the tip, allowing the striper to paint the fibers rather than the infill. Low pressure machines tend to spray a stream of paint that can run down the blades and get into the sand or rubber. CO2

machines should be avoided as the gas can react with some paints designed for synthetic turf and ruin the paint.

## 4. If possible, do not dilute the paint

If the paint is too thin, it will run down the fibers. The result will be a weak line. Diluted paint will also likely color your infill material, leaving "ghosting," even after you have removed all of the paint from the blades. ■

*Doug Schattinger is president & CEO of Pioneer Athletics, [www.pioneerathletics.com](http://www.pioneerathletics.com).*



**When applying paint to synthetic turf fields, always remember that less paint is more.**

