



# Field painting tips & disaster stories

- ⊗ What 3-4 factors do you consider most important for efficient and successful field and logo painting?
- ⊗ What is the worst painting disaster you've ever been involved with or seen happen?

**MARTIN KAUFMAN, CSFM**  
**Turf Managers LLC**  
**Nashville, TN**

Efficient and successful field and logo painting begins with: 1. Preparation; 2. Planning; 3. Observation; and 4. Focus (& double check).

The worst painting disaster I have been a part of is painting a 30 yard line from the west side of a football field to the 31 yard line on the east side of the field, letting it dry and not discovering the problem until I was painting hash marks on the east sideline. This game was on TV too.

**ALLISON MOYER**  
**Grounds Manager**  
**Collegiate School,**  
**Richmond, VA**

**Pre-paint** by planning out on paper what needs to be painted. The colors needed, measurements of the logo and overall look of the project

**Timing** is crucial in getting a good logo. Give yourself plenty of

time to complete the logo. Also, make sure you paint it in enough time for it to completely dry before players arrive. Check with coaches and find out practice/game schedules before you start. Wet paint on a field does not mix well with people walking all over it!

**Equipment.** Always check your equipment before beginning. Check rollers, paint, strings, & tapes are good and usable.

**Patience.** Don't get frustrated. It takes time to create a logo. Things will always turn out better if you do not get frustrated

On the coldest night of the year, I painted an Arena Football field on an outdoor regular football field. It happened to be a synthetic field that had that needed to be painted with embedded regular football hashes, numbers, & lines. After much discussion, the complex made the decision to paint the embedded hashes, numbers, & lines with green paint to cover them up and then repaint

the correct lines for arena football. We tried to get a green as close as possible but in the end it looked tacky.

**BILL CONNELL**  
**Field Operations**  
**Buffalo Bills**

First, all equipment is in good working order (cleaned after last use, properly tuned, all parts, spray tips, etc., inspected).

Second, check weather, team schedule or any other source of disruption that would prevent the goals of the task from getting done.

Third, get proper amount of paint ready to go: mixing, cutting, and filtering.

Fourth, start job and be neat and precise. Don't get lazy or sloppy; be consistent from start to finish.

My worst painting disaster was painting the numbers college distance from the sideline (21 ft), not the professional distance (36 ft) from bottom of the template. I had to dye out wrong numbers during

the night. This was a practice field, but a disaster to me none the less!

**RYAN NEWMAN**  
**Director of Athletic Grounds**  
**University of Colorado**  
**Athletics**

First factor for successful and efficient painting is monitoring the weather. Try to get ahead of forecasted precipitation to make sure the paint dries before it rains. If you can avoid painting in windy conditions, this will minimize the amount of drift you have. Also, as the season progresses, we get colder temperatures and shorter days, so we start the painting earlier to ensure the paint dries in time.

The second factor, and probably the most important, is having a knowledgeable crew; they need to know proper field dimensions, painting equipment operation, and be on the same page with one another. There is a lot of teamwork involved in painting; most processes involve multiple team members so knowing what the other guy is doing and when he is going to do it and vice versa will eliminate most mistakes.

The last one is using quality paint and reliable painting equipment, and making sure the paint is mixed properly and consistently. Taking care of your painting equipment by properly cleaning it when finished will ensure reliability and functionality.

The worst painting disaster I've seen was when I was a student at Iowa State. We had a stand alone unit in the back of a cart and were moving from one end zone to another along the perimeter. We did not wind up the hose for the painter, we were just pulling it behind the cart. We made the turn at the corner and the hose snagged the nail holding the sideline string and it jerked the paint and painter right out of the back of the cart. The other one I witnessed; we had the painter in the back of a truck heading to one of our facili-

ties when the tailgate came down and the painter fell out at about 35 mph. The handle bars were bent a little, but it started up on the first pull and we painted the soccer field with it.

**ABBY MCNEAL, CSFM**  
**Director of Turf Management**  
**Wake Forest Athletics**

Make a good “game plan” for painting by setting the pathway to get things done with the group; this keeps everyone on the same page so they should know what comes next in the process to best be prepared in case things occur.

Have a clear understanding of the layout and/or the logo and take pictures of the logo and field measurements with you into the field to ensure that you put it in the correct location. The picture also helps to make sure that you paint the logo correctly. Field layout information also helps to make sure you have all the correct markings for that particular sport.

Make sure that you have towels and water as paint spills happen and you will need to be prepared to clean them up. Take extra string, nails, and tape measures of varying lengths to help make sure you layout the field or logo correctly.

Take a picture of the final product to be proud and to learn from in the future (teaching tool).

Worst painting disaster I have seen is an NFL field with the arrows on the wrong side of the numbers. I won't say which one but it was about 15 years ago.

Worst painting disaster I was a part of occurred when paint was spilled onto synthetic turf and the employee flooded/washed the spill are with water. The waste water, diluted white water, washed into a local stream and was reported. We then had to provide information (MSDS and labels) to the fire department and environmental police. The employee did the proper thing by washing the spill out, just a lesson learned to know remember where things drain too. The fire department flooded the area with more water to help the situation.

**BRETT TANNER, CSFM**  
**Sports Turf Technician**  
**University of Virginia**

Use a clean and dependable painter. A good paint job starts with good equipment. Consistent cleaning and maintenance of your paint machine will help guarantee its performance when called upon. It's also good to have a backup plan as well, aerosol, 4 inch rollers, or even chalk if needed.

Understand and communicate what is being done and expectations. I try to gather everyone who will be involved during the painting process and go over the steps and the order in which we'll complete each one. I also print out diagrams of the field being painted including field measurements and colors of logos.

I always want to make sure we have enough time to ensure we take all the steps to provide the highest quality product possible. It also helps in the event of inclement weather, equipment problems, or reduced staffing.

I think I've been fortunate, if you're prepared and organized I feel that you can avoid most mistakes. Some of the “disasters” I have been involved with the occasional upside down 3, an arrow pointed the wrong way, or stencil burn from marking a logo in the afternoon on a hot day. You learn from those mistakes and take the appropriate steps to avoid them the next time.

**KEVIN WHITE**  
**Athletic Grounds Lead**  
**Seattle University**

1. Be prepared; make sure you have everything you need and it is ready to go before you start painting.
2. Pay attention to the radar (weather forecasts in Seattle are not always accurate!)
3. Double check the layout from the stands (or higher vantage point) just to make sure everything looks right.
4. Clean-up is just as important as setup!

My worst disaster happened a couple of years ago during our men's soccer home opener against the University of Washington. We had just purchased a new airless sprayer and wanted to use it for the first time to paint the field. Our men's and women's teams use our field for training and games, and because of scheduling we paint before each game so the lines are bright and crisp. We set up the sprayer and ran water through it the day before and thought we were good to go, but for some reason we couldn't get paint to come out of the tip on this day. We discovered we were missing the tip seal, but didn't have a spare and were running out of time. I managed to find an old aerosol sprayer and enough cans to at least put lines on the field (so I thought). Half way down one side, the cable breaks on the handle...I have 30 minutes left before the game kicks off, and I still need to paint AND wind up string. Needless to say, we now have spare everything, including a functioning aerosol sprayer and paint as a backup. ■

The advertisement is a vertical banner with a black background. On the left side, there is a vertical stack of five colored boxes, each containing an image of a product and a label. From top to bottom: a green box with a paint can labeled 'quality bulk paints'; a red box with a windscreen labeled 'custom windscreens'; a yellow box with a fan of aerosol cans labeled 'bright aerosols'; a blue box with a stencil labeled 'custom stencils'; and a green box with a paint sprayer labeled 'painting equipment'. To the right of these boxes, the text 'JOIN THE WORLD CLASS TEAM' is written in a large, white, serif font. Below this, the 'WORLD CLASS athleticsurfaces' logo is displayed, featuring icons of a soccer ball, a football, a tennis ball, and a basketball. At the bottom right, the website 'www.worldclasspaints.com' and the phone number '1.800.748.9649' are listed.