



# 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?

**TODD TRIBBLE**, Athletic Field Superintendent  
**Oklahoma State**

I think using high quality paint, that is mixed correctly, has to be the most important step in having successful logos and lines. We use a national brand and dilute our white to a 50/50 ratio of water to concentrate which allows us to achieve 10 gallons of paint per 5 gallons purchased. I have found on our orange that it needs to be mixed with a bit more concentrate than a 50/50 or our logos come out a bit muted. We stir our paint using a cordless drill along with a paint paddle (~10\$) available at most home improvement stores.

Strings and meticulous operators can really make your paint stand out for the right reasons. We string out every line we paint regardless of its visibility; this helps us ensure that our dimensions are not changing. I make sure our strings are pulled tight before a line is painted which helps prevent strings from "walking" or bowing on us. We generally have the same operators paint the soccer field and football fields as they know where any undulations are and can account for those areas as the painter is being pushed during the painting process. We always have a water source being either a 5-gallon bucket of water or a hose and coupler nearby in case of a spill, wind drift, or a poorly painted area.

As far as painting actual logos I feel like you are going to need two coats for the initial painting before fans see it. We will paint the first coat on a Thursday if we play on Friday at soccer and the second coat on game day. I have always felt like an initial coat of white as a base helps our orange appear

brighter vs. using back to back coats of orange. If we play at home the following week we can usually get away with one paint application instead of two as a base coat is already down. When the team goes out of town we always paint the outline of the logo in white (using strings since our logo has straight edges) just to keep our edges crisp and dimensions where they were intended to be.

Lastly, we always make sure we are looking at the weather forecast 48 hours in advance if we know there is painting that needs to be done. Stillwater tends to be a very windy place so if we know our game is Friday and the wind will be blowing 20-30 mph we will avoid those types of days and paint the day before. We have the same outlook obviously with rain that may be in the area. We have used plywood to block the wind on days we have to paint foul lines and coaches boxes at baseball.

I think if you plan beforehand and have a routine in place before you set up your painters most problems can be avoided. The final process in field preparation is lining and logos and will most often be what your fans, coaches, and administrators notice before anything else. Paint applications are really the finishing touches on your field so we try and nail this portion of the set-up each and every time.

**KEVIN MALONE, CSFM**  
**The LandTek Group**

I've only done a small amount of line painting and logos. But I can say that these would be most important to me:

■ Using a quality sprayer

- Keeping the spraying clean after EVERY use
- Using high quality paint
- Operator experience-practice makes perfect

### KEVIN YEISER,

Director of Grounds & Athletic Facilities

#### Lebanon Valley College (PA)

- Using quality paint
- Use good application equipment. Line painters aren't always the best to use for logo work.
- Staff that pay attention to detail and take pride in what they're doing. Those two things always show in the end result, especially with logos. No logo is better than a poorly painted one.

We haven't had too many disasters but I talked to a colleague at another college where an entire 5-gallon pail of paint was spilled on a synthetic field. It occurred during the hot quick drying days of late summer. Even after cleaning numerous times a shadow could be seen for quite a while.

### JEFF HAAG, Sports Turf Specialist

#### John Carroll University (OH)

Make sure the painter you use has been thoroughly cleaned,

spray tips, filters, and hoses prior to each use, and after the painter has been used. I go by the same method in rinsing out the machine as we are required by pesticide containers; I triple rinse my machine with water.

When painting logos, start from the inside and work your way out.

One cost effective way to save money on small logos that are no larger than 48 inches by 40 inches is to use cardboard. I save our cardboard that is shipped with our pallets of salt we use in the winter on our campus sidewalks. All you need is a ruler to measure the logo and a utility knife. I use them to make my logos on the softball outfield. The best part is that it costs you nothing, just your time. They could possibly be used for football fields as well if you use small logos near the 20 yard lines or in other areas of the field.

Fortunately, I have never had a major bad experience. When I was at Bowling Green State University we used to paint the numbers white and border them with orange by using a 2-inch roller and roll the paint around the numbers. Sometimes we used students to help us do this, and one time they knocked over the bucket of paint. Because of that I would suggest to always have a bucket of clear water and rags on hand to help dilute and clean up any spills. ■

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