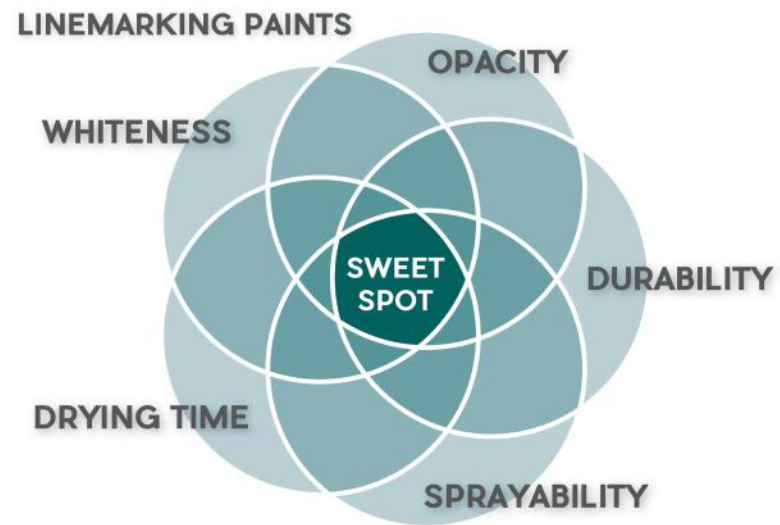


Insight into line marking paint

The introduction of VARS has been very controversial; the move from just goal line technology to its wider use has met with a mixed reception. However, this level of sophistication is not been available to the vast majority of field sports and therefore referees still have the task and responsibility for making the right line call.

Lines that can make the difference between a good call and a bad one has been made easier due to the development of advanced pitch line marking paints that provide whiter, brighter lines at a visual quality that could only have been dreamt about just a few years ago. How has this come about?

Firstly the making of the paint, or rather its specific production for application as a line marking paint, is quite complex. Just like a winning team, it's about getting the right players in exactly the right positions, in the right formation, performing together in harmony.



At the very basic level, the water quality is vitally important. At Linemark UK Ltd, the manufacturer of Rigby Taylor's award-winning Impact paints, with their manufacturing plant situated in the centre of the Rossendale Valley, in Lancashire, they are extremely fortunate to have access to very soft water that contains just the right amount of calcium/magnesium ions.

Combined with carefully sourced, best-in-class, raw materials, many years of scientifically exacting and perfecting ratios, Linemark UK is producing paint of the highest performance quality.

All well and good, research and development has created a great formulation but what happens next – what are the tests necessary to ensure the paint is 'fit for purpose'?

Let's take an example of any athlete. They will measure their fitness to compete in such areas, as speed, stamina, flexibility, muscular strength and muscular endurance. Measuring a line marking's 'fitness test' is of course different but the same process of measurement still applies. In this case it would be the measurement of whiteness, opacity, durability, drying time and sprayability.

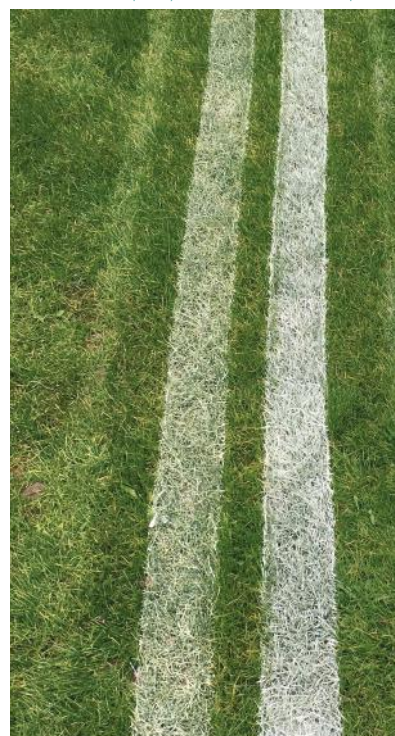
It is the right combination of these measurements that will create the 'sweet spot' required. How is this achieved? Using a spectrophotometer in the lab, a measurement of a paint film's whiteness (L factor) and its opacity number is provided. This provides a good indication of how the paint covering will look when applied on the surface.

No matter how white and bright the paint may look, it has to have a high level of durability to ensure it has lasting qualities. Again in the laboratory, the paint is applied onto square plates and let to dry. It is then subject to a sequence of 500 or more spins of an abrasive wheel; the weight of the paint film is measured at the start of the sequence and again at the end to see how much paint has worn away and so in effect showing the toughness (durability) of the product.

By using the right resins, in the correct amount to safeguard the integrity of the paint film, a paint can be made that helps protect it from water, (washed away by rain or irrigation), surface friction (player and machinery wear) and UV light.

The time taken for the paint to dry is a vital part of the 'fitness test' and is dependant on a number of factors; temperature, humidity and air flow.

Whiteness and opacity between two different paints



The 'sweet spot' when it all comes together

Under laboratory conditions, the paint is assessed and timed using a drying wheel, together with a temperature and humidity thermometer. If this process is not carried out, the result on the pitch will be easily seen. Modern line-marking machines are mostly spray types and as a result, the sprayability or flow of the product is critical. Formulas should be blended so that paint easily moves through pumps, pipes and nozzles.

There is little doubt that the advances in paint manufacture ensure grounds manager have the very best quality products that complement their skills. When Rigby Taylor Ltd launched Impact ready to use paint over a decade ago, it smashed through the barriers of traditional practices and revolutionised line marking to such an extent that its development was rewarded with both the Queens Award for Innovation and also for Enterprise.

Impact paint is now sold in over 50 countries worldwide and was selected as the paint for marking the pitches for the 2018 World Cup final.

The advances in paint manufacturing technology is still continuing and the industry can expect to see this converted to product use in the very near future... watch this line!

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