



How to Correctly Prepare Asphalt for Athletic Court Surfacing

1. Choosing the Substrate

Athletic courts, including tennis, pickleball, basketball, and multi-sport surfaces—are commonly constructed on asphalt or concrete bases. Asphalt is often preferred due to lower initial cost, faster construction time, and better flexibility in freeze–thaw climates. However, proper asphalt preparation is critical to long-term performance of acrylic surfacing systems.

This document outlines recommended best practices for preparing **asphalt** prior to application of acrylic athletic court coatings.

2. Asphalt Construction Best Practices

For new asphalt courts, construction should follow guidelines established by the **American Sports Builders Association (ASBA)**. Although written primarily for tennis and pickleball courts, these standards apply equally to basketball and multi-sport installations.

Key construction recommendations include: - Proper stone base thickness and compaction - Hot-mix asphalt placed in multiple lifts - Final lift designed for smoothness and correct slope

3. Base, Drainage, and Slope

Proper drainage is essential to prevent water-related failures such as cracking, bubbling, or coating delamination.

Best practices include: - A well-compacted aggregate base - Positive perimeter drainage - Finished court slope of approximately **1% (1 inch per 10 feet)**

Standing water on or beneath the asphalt surface will significantly reduce coating life.

4. Asphalt Curing and Oxidation

Fresh asphalt contains oils that must be oxidized before acrylic coatings can properly bond.

- Allow **minimum 14–30 days** of cure time before coating
- In cooler or shaded conditions, longer cure times may be required
- Asphalt must turn from deep black to dark gray before surfacing



⚠ Coating asphalt too early can result in peeling, bubbling, or soft coatings.

5. Surface Texture and Smoothness

Asphalt should be smooth, dense, and free of segregation or raveling.

Surface requirements: - No loose aggregate - No shiny, oil-rich areas - Uniform texture suitable for acrylic adhesion

If surface defects exist, they must be corrected prior to coating.

6. Cleaning and Surface Preparation

Before applying any coatings: - Remove all dirt, dust, leaves, and debris - Pressure wash if necessary - Allow surface to fully dry

7. Crack and Surface Repairs

Asphalt will crack over time due to thermal movement. All cracks must be properly treated prior to surfacing.

Recommended practices: - Clean structural cracks - Fill with acrylic crack filler or Patch Binder- Allow repairs to fully cure before coating

Note: Crack repair minimizes reflection cracking but does not eliminate future movement.

8. Resurfacer Application

After repairs and cleaning: - Apply two coats of **Court Resurfacer** - Resurfacer fills minor voids and creates a uniform surface - Multiple coats may be required depending on surface condition Allow each coat to dry thoroughly before proceeding.

9. Applying Color Coatings and Lines

Once resurfacing is complete: - Apply two coats of Sport Coating Base - Allow proper drying between coats - Finish with line primer and playing lines

All coatings should be applied under appropriate temperature and weather conditions.



Summary Table

Step	Best Practice
Construction	Follow ASBA guidelines
Base Prep	Proper stone base and compaction
Drainage	Ensure 1% slope and positive drainage
Curing	Allow asphalt to oxidize 14–30+ days
Cleaning	Pressure wash and remove contaminants
Repairs	Fill cracks and surface defects
Resurfacing	Apply acrylic resurfacer
Coating	Apply color coatings and playing lines

Proper asphalt preparation is the foundation of a durable, high-performing athletic court surface.

Skipping or rushing these steps will almost always lead to premature coating failure.