

History of Paintball

The evolution of the game of paintball began in the late 1970's, when the Nelson Paint Company developed a gas-operated gun and marking pellets for a variety of industries, including Forestry and Ranching. The guns and the pellets were used variously to mark trees for removal, cows to be culled from the herd, and essentially anything else that required putting a semi-permanent mark on an object from a distance.

As it goes the game of paintball was created by two friends, Charles Gaines and Bill Gurnsey. The two of them concluded that they needed something like a marking gun and a set of rules that would allow people to test their individual skills against each other. After about a year of searching, Gaines and Gurnsey chose the Nelson Paint company's guns and pellets, developed a set of rules for "survival games". So, in 1981, Charles and Bill, along with 12 friends played the 1st ever paintball game using these industrial paintball guns on a field measuring over one-hundred acres (with no masks or safety equipment!).

Shortly after this experimental game the originators gave a name to their concept calling it, "The National Survival Game." This name reflects the nature of paintball as it was first played – a small group of friends getting together in the woods to play total elimination games. Sometimes the friends broke into teams to play each other, but most paintball games were "every man for himself."

Over the years, recreational paintball has become more sophisticated. Because more people were playing at one time, using teams became the standards. Different game variations began to form. The most popular paintball game became "capture the flag", but offensive/defensive scenarios also were popular.

As the number of people interested in paintball grew, so did the development of the commercial paintball industry. The first outdoor commercial paintball field opened in 1982. The first indoor field followed in 1984. These paintball fields allowed large groups of people to meet in one place to play. Paintball business owners were pushed to develop new and exciting ways to keep the players entertained. This further advanced paintball's history by driving the development of new scenarios and styles of playing. Today, paintball now graces newsstands with numerous publications and even has several television shows broadcasting the sport.

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