



## Norse's 7 Step Painting Guide

Well, as luck would have it, I worked very closely with Mike "Fubar" Thorp on the design specs for the Fantasy Football Wizard and Toad, so when the chance came to paint these awesome figs up for the site, I was delighted. I also thought it was a great opportunity to try to provide a basic step by step painting guide for the community. I know I am not the best painter in the Fantasy Football world, but hopefully this guide might help those with less experience or confidence than I have. Apologies in advance if anything seems too basic or patronizing to the more experienced painter....

### Step 1 – Preparation (approx 10-15 minutes)

Take the time to clean up the model and file off any flash or mould lines. It is a boring job but one which is essential if you want the finished model to look right. Glue the model to its base and, at this point, I usually also fill up the gaps in the base with putty (either modeling putty or sometimes just Blu-Tac!). This will give a smoother surface to flock once the model is finished. The model should now also be undercoated with a thin, smooth layer of primer. Most painters use spray primers, but sometimes I undercoat by hand, especially if I am only working on one model (or it is raining!). The choice of colour of undercoat is a very personal one and some painters always prime the model in black or always in white no matter what they are painting. I prefer to prime the model depending on how brightly I intend to paint them afterwards. For the wizard, I knew I wanted him to be part of my all-female team which wears a purple and white uniform, so I decided a white undercoat would be better this time around. After a light spray, I then used a watered down white paint to fill in the recesses where the spray had not reached.





## Step 2 – Base Coat (approx 20-30 minutes)

Now it's time to make some decisions and add some colour to the model. Almost all paints available are sold with a very thick consistency and should be watered down slightly before applying to the model. Over a white undercoat, this sometimes means the paint appears slightly streaky, but as I expected and fully intended to apply a few thin coats of paint before I am finished, this is not a worry at this stage. What I am trying to achieve is a rough idea of what will be where when I am finished. I also usually paint colours which are darker than my intended final shade; this allows me to highlight up to my desired colour by the time I am finished. This is especially important for white, which I always start by painting mid-grey and then working up towards white as I highlight. In the case of the wizard, I knew that most of his clothes would be white and purple, so decided to set these off by giving him a very plain and simple brown cloak and hat – I wanted these to look quite old and shabby by contrast to his bright team uniform, so started with a dark brown expecting to highlight this up to look like worn leather by the time I was finished. At this stage the model looks pretty unimpressive it has to be said!





### Step 3 – First Highlight & Black Lining (approx 15-20 minutes)

Sometimes I like to do an early, rough highlight at this stage just to see how things might work out. One of the next steps will be to apply a darker wash to almost all regions of the model and this highlight will be made very subtle by doing so, so I do not waste too much time trying to be precise or careful (in fact it is almost done using a drybrush technique). The exception again is the white, where I will not be applying a wash. Here I apply the lighter grey colour more carefully over the mid-grey and try to avoid making too many mistakes.

I also took my thinnest brush at this stage and painted very thin lines of black ink (or thin paint) between the coloured sections of his hat-band and scarf. Black lining is a slightly cartoony way of separating colours on a model, but where stripes or bands of colour meet, it really helps to give some definition and looks especially effective on football uniforms. I also painted black any areas which I intended to have metallic at the end. Metallic paints look much better on a black base than a white base.

At the end of this stage the model still looks very amateur, and not at all as if I had spent the best part of an hour on it until now!





#### Step 4 – Painting Eyes!! (approx 5 minutes.. no, really!)

OK, so everyone is scared of painting eyes.. you spend 30 minutes with your tongue out the corner of your mouth and your own eyes going squint and end up with a model that looks like he is watching two football matches at the same time, right? Wrong! It takes 5 minutes and it's easy, as long as you have a small brush of course! First, paint the eyes completely black.. don't worry if you get some black on the skin around the eyes, that's just fine:



Now, within the black area you paint a horizontal white line.. ideally the line should be thicker in the middle of the eye and thinner at the ends – the best way to achieve this is to paint half the eye and then turn the model around and paint the other half, pulling the brush slightly towards you both times.. don't forget to keep your paint quite thin to avoid destroying the detail of the model.

Then you paint a vertical line in very thin black paint (you can also use dark blue or green paint which works really nicely on female models).. in likelihood, the model now looks a bit weird, but the basic eyes should be visible even if the rest of the face has been painted over while doing so!





Now just apply flesh coloured paint around the eyes to tidy it up and Hey Presto!



#### **Step 4 – Washing (approx 10-15 minutes)**

Applying a wash is a quick and easy way to shade a model and also to disguise some mistakes – especially areas where folds and creases make it hard to paint a straight line. When I was younger I used to use a black wash for just about every colour I had painted, mostly because I only had a black wash in my collection, but the results were far from good! Nowadays I use colour specific washes on each relevant area of the model and where I do not own a specific wash or ink I make one instead by mixing paint and then thinning it down a lot with water. So on the wizard, I applied a dark brown wash to his cloak and hat, a light brown wash to his skin areas (being careful not to undo all the work I had done on the eyes!) and a dark purple wash (which I made with black and purple paint) to his jacket and sleeves. Even the tiny frog on his hat got a dark green wash - although I fully intended to highlight this little chap up to almost luminous proportions, I still needed a dark base to work from.

My orange toad now got a red wash on his body and a brown wash in his mouth and nostrils – he would also be destined for a neon colour-scheme, but needed to start off a light red shade to help me achieve a natural looking result. If you are working with multiple washes on one model, it is always a good idea to let one wash dry before applying the next wash, otherwise they sometimes bleed into each other by accident. By now I had been working on these models for about an hour and a quarter in total and they were ready for details and highlighting to begin! Currently, they looked like this:





### Step 5 – Highlighting (approx 30-45 minutes)

OK, so I now have a model which is ready to highlight: this is the process that will see the figure start to look more 3 dimensional, more eye-catching and just generally well painted. The whole point of highlighting is to apply gradually lighter and lighter shades of paint to smaller and smaller areas of the model – this should simulate where natural light strikes the model creating areas of light and shade, so imagine where the



sun would strike the model and then lighten these areas up accordingly. Normally, I apply 2 – 4 highlights on a model depending on the colour I am highlighting. Black is a very difficult colour to highlight as the end result often looks grey, so I usually only apply 1 or 2 highlights to black as a maximum. Other colours I have sometimes applied 6 or 8 highlights to in the past depending on the effect I was going for. There is no hard and fast rule about how many highlights to add to a model, all I would say is that the more highlights on a figure, the more eye-catching but less realistic the model looks in the end. Although the main focus of my highlighting was the wizard, below is a range of pictures showing the toad as he advanced through successive highlights of brighter and brighter oranges and yellows until I was happy with the end result:



The wizard now looked much better as well and was in need of some detail work to bring him to life:



**Step 6 – Details & Metallics (approx 20-30 minutes)**



Almost finished!! So now I picked out some of the details like the buttons on his jacket, the gold chain around his neck and the wonderful spell icons on his pouches. After some feedback from others I also lightened the toad's throat a bit (because that is what they look like in real life!) and decided to paint his staff in a wonderful turquoise colour to contrast with all the purple on show.. although I painted the staff from beginning to end in 5 minutes, the steps I went through were the same – base colour, highlight, wash, and then more and more highlights until I was happy... Now the Wizard and Toad were really beginning to rock! I also fished out some gloss varnish for the Toad's eyes, the bottle on the wizard's belt and the tiny toad on his hat to make them really shine.



#### Step 7 – Basing (approx 10 minutes)

Normally I glue sand on the base at this stage (using PVA or wood-glue) and then paint it brown to look like bare earth. A combination of time limitations and also shortage of space on the base convinced me not to bother on this occasion and just to go with flock and static grass.

I always make sure the base has been given a good few coats of green paint (you may have seen this over the last few pictures) before gluing on flock, which I do using a slightly watered down mix of PVA glue. I flocked the entire base and then left to dry over night. The following morning I then used a watered down mix of PVA to add static grass in small patches on the base. If you use too much static grass the base tends to look too much like an overgrown summer meadow, so use it in small patches to look like places where the grounds-keeper missed a bit! Once glued on, shake off the excess and then blow gently on the base.. this is where the grass should stand up





on one end and look like real grass, but only if you have used the right glue.. using super-glue will NOT work!!! The final pieces looked like this...



I must say I am very happy with the end results.. often I am not too pleased once finished, but I felt as if these two models would look great along side the rest of my team. The total time taken had been about 3 hours (or just under) which also pleased me a lot and kept Mrs Norse off my back too! I have very little time to paint these days thanks to two other miniatures who like to help me paint as well. At least it's always nice to have an appreciative audience... ;-)



Until next time...

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