MX Stairs

From: M Bret Blackford (bret_blackford@yahoo.com)

To: bret_blackford@yahoo.com

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Yes. Based on the photos of the **MX West Gym stairs**, I'd use **dark bronze/brown on the structural/railing portions and flat black on the actual walking treads**. I would not paint the canopy unless you decide it needs refinishing.

What I would buy

Product	Amount	Form	Color	Where
Rust-Oleum Professional Rusty Metal Primer	**1 gallon**	Can	Rust/red primer	All bare/rusted steel; ideally a complete primer coat on the badly weathered stair steel
Rust-Oleum Rusty Metal Primer spray	**3 cans**	Aerosol	Rust/red	Welds, corners, backs of rails, underside of grating, inaccessible areas
Exterior DTM metal enamel	**1 gallon**	Can	**Dark bronze / very dark brown**	Railings, handrails, balusters, stringers, posts and structural steel
Matching **dark-bronze metal spray**	**2–3 cans**	Aerosol	Dark bronze	Tight corners/welds that are difficult to brush
Rust-Oleum Professional High Performance Enamel	**1 gallon**	Can	**Flat Black**	Stair treads, grating and diamond-pattern nosings
Rust-Oleum Professional black spray	**2–3 cans**	Aerosol	Flat Black	Underside/corners of grating and hard-to-brush areas

The Rust-Oleum Professional rusty-metal primer is specifically intended for heavily rusted exterior metal, and the gallon is rated around 390 sq. ft.; Rust-Oleum recommends topping it with Professional Enamel for maximum performance. (Lowe's) The Professional flat-black enamel is oil-based, made for heavy-duty/commercial metal, rust- and chip-resistant, and rated around 390–440 sq. ft. per gallon. (Lowe's)

For bronze, Lowe's has Rust-Oleum **Anodized Bronze** and **Dark Bronze** aerosol products, but the exact gallon equivalent is harder to match. (Lowe's) For the gallon, I would have Lowe's tint a **Direct-to-Metal exterior coating** to closely match the existing canopy/support-column bronze. Valspar's DTM exterior coating is designed for exterior metal and can be brushed or rolled. (Lowe's)

Important: have Lowe's help you match the gallon bronze and then buy the aerosol that looks closest. I'd spray a test piece first because two products called "dark bronze" can look noticeably different.

Color layout

I would finish it this way:

Dark bronze: handrails, vertical railing bars, railing frames, stair stringers/side plates, support posts and other structural stair steel.

Flat black: all open-grate stair treads and the diamond-plate/nosing portions of each tread.

Leave the **black door** black and the existing **canopy/roof bronze** alone unless it actually needs painting.

That will reproduce and clean up the basic design you already have: bronze architectural structure with black walking surfaces.

Prep — this matters more than the paint

I would spend considerably more time preparing than painting.

1. **Remove leaves, dirt and debris.**
2. Apply a **degreaser** such as Krud Kutter/TSP substitute and scrub oily or grimy areas, especially handrails and treads.
3. **Pressure wash** the entire stair assembly. Don't use an extremely aggressive tip close to sound paint—you aren't trying to blast every coating off.
4. Let it dry thoroughly, preferably **24–48 hours**.
5. **Scrape everything loose.** Any paint that lifts, flakes or sounds hollow needs to come off.
6. Use a **wire brush or wire wheel** on rust. Remove loose/scaly rust; you do **not** have to grind every rust-stained area to shiny steel.
7. Feather rough paint edges with sandpaper, roughly 80–120 grit.
8. Scuff glossy existing paint so the new coating can bond.
9. Brush/vacuum/blow away all dust and wipe down as necessary. The manufacturer's prep calls for cleaning, rinsing, drying, and removing loose rust/paint before coating. (Lowe's)

One caution: because these stairs and coatings may be old, **test the existing paint for lead before aggressive grinding or sanding**. Rust-Oleum's own instructions specifically warn about lead dust when disturbing old coatings. (Rust-Oleum)

Primer

After everything is completely dry:

Roll/brush: use the gallon primer on the stringers, posts, railings and accessible portions of the treads.

Spray cans: use these around welds, inside corners, where vertical bars meet horizontal rails, underside edges and other places where the brush can't adequately coat the steel.

On especially rusty areas, **brush primer into pits and seams** rather than merely rolling across the surface.

I would prime **all visible rust and exposed steel without exception**. Given the condition shown in your photos, I'd probably just give most of the staircase a complete primer coat rather than trying to save a little primer.

Bronze finish

Use a **4-inch solvent-resistant mini roller** for:

- stringers
- broad railing pieces
- posts
- other flat steel

Use a **1½–2½ inch quality brush** around:

- balusters
- welds
- corners
- rail connections

You'll probably find that a combination of mini-roller + brush works much faster than trying to spray the whole staircase.

Use the bronze aerosol **only for awkward spots**, not as the primary method. Spray cans would become expensive very quickly—the Dark Bronze aerosol only covers roughly 8–12 sq. ft. per can. (Lowe's)

I would use **two finish coats**.

Black treads

Definitely paint them.

For those open steel grates:

Brush first, working the paint around the individual bars and welds. A small mini-roller can then help cover the tops and diamond-pattern nosings.

Use black spray cans from several angles for the **undersides and intersections that the brush misses**.

Don't simply spray downward from above—you want corrosion protection on:

- top of the grating
- sides of the bars

- underside
- welds
- attachment points to the stringers

I **would not put anti-skid grit on the open grating**. The grating and diamond-pattern nosings already provide mechanical traction, and grit would make the grating unnecessarily difficult to coat and maintain.

Sequence I would use

Day 1: degrease → pressure wash.

Day 2 or 3: scrape → wire brush/wire wheel → sand → clean.

Next dry day: primer, using gallon first and aerosol for missed areas.

After manufacturer recoat time: first finish coat — bronze structure + black treads.

Next appropriate recoat window: second finish coat.

Rust-Oleum's Professional enamel generally dries to the touch in about 2–4 hours but lists a **24-hour recoat time**, so don't rush the second coat. (Lowe's)

I'd keep people **off the stair treads for at least 48 hours after the final coat**, and preferably give them several days before heavy use.

My estimated quantity for this particular staircase

I think **1 gallon each of primer, bronze and black is the right purchase**. You'll probably have some left over, but I would much rather have matching paint remaining for future touch-ups than discover halfway through the second coat that a quart wasn't enough.

I'd also buy roughly **3 primer aerosols + 2 bronze aerosols + 3 black aerosols**. They aren't for covering large areas—they're your tool for getting coating into all the awkward places.

So the basic Lowe's cart is:

1 gal Rusty Metal Primer + 3 primer sprays
1 gal dark-bronze DTM metal paint + 2 bronze sprays
1 gal Rust-Oleum Professional Flat Black + 3 black sprays
4" solvent-resistant mini rollers + covers
2" quality brush + small angled brush
wire brushes/wire-wheel attachments
scrapers + 80/120-grit paper
degreaser
mineral spirits for the oil-based Rust-Oleum products
masking plastic/cardboard

For these stairs, **prep → rust primer → two finish coats** is worth doing. Once finished properly, it should look dramatically better and give you much more protection than simply hitting the visible rust with spray paint.