

SPORTS FLOOR GUIDANCE



CHOOSING THE RIGHT FLOOR

When deciding on a sports floor there are several factors to consider prior to investing in a surface that will be part of your facility for many years.

AS A GUIDE LISTED BELOW ARE THE TOP THREE OPTIONS CURRENTLY CONSIDERED WHEN CHOOSING A SPORTS FLOOR:

1. SPRUNG WOODEN SPORTS FLOOR (A3 or A4 area elastic)

This is the preferred choice for British Wheelchair Basketball (BWB) and the minimum requirement for International Wheelchair Basketball competition as it delivers all the performance requirements enabling the highest level of sport to be played.

This floor complies with the latest standard for indoor sports floors – EN 14904, Sport England Guidance Notes and importantly the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) which states that an A3 or A4 sprung floor is the minimum requirement for school sports and multi-use areas, furthermore the ESFA restricts the use of foam-backed vinyl's or cushioned flooring in activity areas. All sprung wooden floor systems require regular maintenance and if used for non-sporting events must use floor protection such as giant carpet tiles in order to protect the surface.

Sprung wooden floors provide wheelchair users with ideal rolling resistance, not allowing chair castors to sink into a soft foam backing. Spongy foam backed surfaces may contribute to stress injuries and fatigue, affecting all levels of wheelchair usage, therefore a surface with a low rolling resistance is the official requirement of BWB when choosing a venue or supporting a project where questions of suitability of surfaces require guidance or support.



DYNAMIK SPRUNG OAK FLOOR AT BWB TRAINING VENUE

2. SPRUNG SPORTS FLOOR FINISHED WITH A SOLID SYNTHETIC SURFACE (A3 or A4 area elastic)

A solid (non-foam backed) synthetic surface installed onto a sprung base or undercarriage replicates the performance and feel of a wooden sprung floor. This type of sprung system utilises a synthetic playing surface which can be polyurethane (PU), sport linoleum or sport vinyl.

Synthetic playing surfaces offer low levels of maintenance compared to a wooden sprung floor therefore is a very cost-effective option. Floors of this type comply with both the European Norm for indoor sports floors BS EN14904 and the latest Sport England Guidance Notes. It is important that any synthetic playing surface when combined with a sprung undercarriage must be of solid, homogeneous construction i.e. without foam backings or pads. This guidance falls in line with the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) specification which restricts the use of cushioned flooring within sports and activity spaces as per their technical Annex 2D 2017.

Albeit not every project or flooring refurbishment is funded by the ESFA, BWB have acknowledged the restriction and see it as a positive specification which supports the provision of surfaces that comply with The Equality Act 2010 and further support the needs of wheelchair users and specifically wheelchair sport.



3. FOAM BACKED VINYL (point elastic)

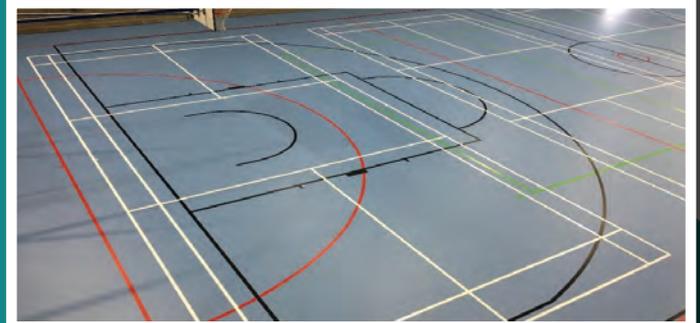
For a vast quantity of schools this option would be deemed suitable for use in sports halls.

For very young children this soft spongy surface offers some surface comfort if interacting directly with the floor, however caution needs to be applied if using tables, chairs or heavy sports equipment as these can indent or damage foam-backed surfaces. Moreover, thicker spongier point elastic surfaces are not considered ideal for wheelchair users due to their high rolling resistance and user fatigue. As a result of independent testing carried out by BWB and upon receiving feedback from other governing bodies and wheelchair users, it is not recommended that point elastic foam backed surfaces are used within a facility that is wanting to support the use of wheelchair sports specifically wheelchair basketball at any level of play.

There are considerations that sometimes are not made clear to the end user. For example, current requirements from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) state that activity spaces, such as those used for sport, must now be sprung A3 or A4 area elastic floors. A foam-backed vinyl is a point elastic floor (P1, P2 or P3) and as such would not meet the current ESFA specification or guidance.



DYNAMIK A4 AREA ELASTIC SPRUNG FLOOR FINISHED IN SPORTS VINYL AS INSTALLED AT BADMINTON SCHOOL



DYNAMIK A4 AREA ELASTIC SPRUNG FLOOR FINISHED IN SEAMLESS POLYURETHANE (PU) AS INSTALLED AT WIRKSWORTH LEISURE CENTRE



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