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## Elevating performance and safety:

### The advanced role of sports flooring beyond standard vinyl

**By Jon Burnitt - National Sales Manager Sports & Education for Gerflor GBI Ltd**

The quality of an indoor sports sheet vinyl floor can give specifiers a sporting advantage. A key function of sports flooring is to help protect players from injury and enhance their athletic performance.

A sports floor surface is arguably the most important element of a sporting facility to its players, and to those who design, build and manage indoor sports premises (whether this be in the education, leisure, fitness market), their requirements high on the agenda is the need for a high quality and sustainable sports floorings that consistently delivers the comfort, safety and performance aspects that are so crucial to everyone taking part in sport.

The fundamental importance of the role of indoor sports floorings to environments like clubs, gyms, sports halls, leisure centres and multi-use facilities can therefore not be underestimated, regardless of whether they are low-impact or elite performance sports locations. This also extends to educational establishments like schools, colleges and universities where long-term injuries to the bones, joints and ligaments of budding athletes, especially those still growing, could cut short a potential sporting career.

Clearly aesthetics, acoustics, hygiene, resistance to wear, easy maintenance and good indoor air quality are key factors to sports venues. But when it comes to reducing the risk of injury, minimising the severity of an injury should it occur, and helping to prevent both short and long-term impact injuries, then the choice of sports flooring is critical.

For specialist sports facilities with volleyball, badminton and other racket sport courts, for example, it is a case of selecting the ideal sports surface for the game so specifiers may need guidance from specification specialists. Equally important is the correct choice of flooring for multi-use venues where there is a need to accommodate other activities in addition to sport such as concerts, assemblies and examinations which require the use of occasional tables and chairs.

Flooring manufacturers specialising in sports flooring have therefore developed new product innovations to provide the best possible flooring solutions to meet the needs of varying sports facilities and to achieve the perfect balance between co-efficient of friction and easy movement.

There are different types of sports floors and the most commonly used include point elastic flooring for multi-use to elite sports venues, area elastic sports such as sprung wooden floors that are good for ball bouncing games, and combined area-elastic and point elastic flooring offering differing benefits. European sports flooring standard EN 14904 outlines the minimum performance requirements for floor coverings classified as indoor sports flooring.

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Point elastic flooring offers three levels of shock absorbency depending on the centre for different usage. A point elastic P1 flooring provides 25% shock absorbency retention, with P2 35% and P3 45% respectively. A P3 flooring provides the greatest level of impact control and will instantly absorb impact with the floor thereby meeting the requirements of elite sports flooring.

Additionally, the Impact Protection Index (IPI) indicates the protection levels a sports flooring will provide. The higher the IPI level, the higher the protection gain and impact injury when falling, diving or sliding on the floor. The highest-level achieving products on the market have an IPI of 88%, giving greater protection to players of high-risk sports. Whereas an IPI of 50% is more suited to lower risk sports.

Combined elastic and double density foam sport floor systems also enable foam technology that allows the lower layer to compress while the upper layer remains firm. This prevents fatigue through twice the area of the foot allowing for greater freedom of movement in rotation whilst permitting a secure foothold that minimises risk of injury.

Multi-layer shock absorbing P3 floorings are 12mm thick with a foam layer and an IPI level of 88%. P3 floorings comprising vinyl PVC sheets reinforced with fibre glass grid also give outstanding stability. A P1 flooring with a double fibre glass grid offers greater resistance to indentation in multi-use locations.

In some sports flooring systems built-in, easy maintenance, intelligent surface treatments provide a perfect compromise between slide and grip when appropriate sports shoes are worn.

Timber sports floorings are also popular for their traditional good looks. However, certified hardwood sports flooring, available when installed with an undercarriage system provides a resilient sprung floor with the values of area elastic and shock absorbency.

Today's indoor sports floorings couple visual impact with advanced technology to provide the heightened performance and safety characteristics that sports environments demand. Attractive designs in PVC flooring, including wood effects, provide specifiers the choice needed to create interior spaces that reflect brand and image.

As the performance qualities required differ from sport to sport and venue to venue, the next generation of sports floorings is rising to the challenge of delivering champion solutions.

Taraflex® sports flooring from Gerflor has been fitted at over 47% Olympic Games since 1976. Approved by numerous National and International governing bodies as a world-class sports surface, it is also widely installed within the education, community, leisure, health and fitness sectors.

Taraflex® is ideal for new build projects and refurbishments and is extremely durable and cost-effective to maintain. Over 6 million pupils every day enjoy the benefits of Taraflex® sports flooring, as it delivers a versatile range that can be used for various multi-specialist applications.

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Taraflex® is treated with ProtecSol®, which renders polish redundant. With its triple action meaning no polish is ever required, it contributes to easy maintenance and anti-friction burn and slide/grip. Meanwhile, surface reinforcement and abrasion resistance is provided by a D-Max fibre glass grid. The flooring offers maximum hygiene with bacteriostatic and a fungistatic treatment which provides easy maintenance, friction protection and 'intelligent' sliding coefficient.

Sports can play a huge part in everyday life. With a complete range of shock absorption P1/P2/P3, Taraflex® sports floors from Gerflor deliver the right solution every time, whether it is for leisure, exercise and play for all ages and abilities.

## **Let's Talk about Gerflor!**

For more than 80 years, Gerflor has been designing, manufacturing and marketing innovative, decorative and sustainable solutions for floors, walls and finishes. Gerflor is a leading manufacturer of comprehensive contract interior products, including vinyl, linoleum, carpets, and rubber that are ideal for a host of applications and meet each customer's need across the contract and residential and sports markets. Gerflor Group achieved in 2024 a turnover of around 1,500 M€, operating in over 100 countries and employing 5,000 people.

Gerflor innovations help to create attractive, comfortable, and functional environments, as well as enhance and protect a vast range of interiors. Gerflor solutions are proven to enhance the longevity of a building whilst reducing long term maintenance costs. Gerflor works in partnership with a large array of sectors to ensure buildings are safe and accessible for all users.

## **Contact us for further information**

Learn more about Gerflor solutions, ask for a free sample or contact us to speak to a specialist today by calling 01625 428 922, emailing [contractuk@gerflor.com](mailto:contractuk@gerflor.com), or visiting [gerflor.co.uk](http://gerflor.co.uk) for the latest flooring and finishing innovations.

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