

21ST April 2026

Gerflor Scores Big with 'Taraflex' at the University of Brighton Cricket Academy with Batting and Bowling Brilliance!

When The University of Brighton required a major refurbishment on site at their indoor Cricket training grounds, they entrusted international flooring expert, Gerflor, to deliver the ideal sports floorcovering solutions for this much-needed upgrade of the facility.

Approximately 735 m² of Taraflex® Performance SL in 'Clay', was specified to meet ECB performance guidelines, selected for its outstanding durability and a striking option for cricket training. This was further complemented and enhanced with also 1502 m² of Taraflex® Evolution in 'Mint Green'. Taraflex Performance was chosen for its uniqueness as a fast-track loose lay solution, and with it being specified in this format for the project, no adhesives were required on site. This simplified the renovation process and significantly reduced installation time and cost.

The Square One Cricket Academy (User of the facilities) at the University of Brighton enables students to combine their degree studies with world-class cricket training, with 60 fully funded places available each year for both women and men. The academy is designed to support talented players through elite coaching, structured strength and conditioning, performance analysis, and competitive match play, all delivered alongside a full academic programme. By integrating sport and education, the academy helps students develop as cricketers while gaining valuable qualifications, preparing them for future pathways both within professional sport and beyond university life.

The newly completed Brighton Cricket Academy now stands as the largest indoor cricket facility in the UK and Northern Hemisphere, occupying a repurposed 2,200 sqm Virgin Active tennis centre at the University of Brighton's Falmer Campus. This flagship facility was delivered in partnership with Square One Education and the University itself, as part of a long-term vision to create a performance hub for cricket development in the South-East. The complex includes nine high-performance cricket lanes, two tensioned training cages, specialist netting systems, and Gerflor surfacing that meets ECB guidelines throughout. Every element of the install was designed with multi-user flexibility in mind, enabling elite-level training for Sussex CCC professionals as well as regular access for schools, students, clubs, and grassroots players.

Commenting on the project, Michael Evans, Gerflor Key Account Manager for Sport and Education said, "The project came to us through Durant Sports' interaction with the university. They chose Taraflex® Performance SL due to its consistent bounce and high-quality performance. The flooring also offers the benefit of quick and efficient replacement, meaning that when areas are overused, such as batting and bowling ends, sections can be replaced with minimal downtime and no need for subfloor repairs."

Adding further context, Michael Evans explained, "The Taraflex® Performance SL and Taraflex® Evolution sports flooring installed were the natural choice for the University of Brighton, as both meet ECB guidelines and their rigorous performance requirements for indoor cricket facilities. They were seeking a world-class sports surface that matches those used at leading ECB facilities across the country, ensuring players can perform at their best while staying protected."

To meet the stringent criteria set by the ECB, the installation of the new Taraflex® vinyl sports flooring needed to be both innovative and delivered to an exceptionally high standard, ensuring performance, safety, and durability for elite-level cricket training.

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The solution demanded precision planning, technical expertise and an in-depth understanding of the requirements of high-performance sporting environments.

Established in 2008, Durant Sports specialises in the design, manufacture, and installation of cricket facilities, including scoreboards, ground equipment, non-turf pitches, and netting systems. With every project managed by their expert in-house team, Durant Sports oversees the full process from initial planning through to final installation, ensuring quality control, programme efficiency, and a seamless handover. Their specialist experience made them a natural partner for delivering a flooring installation that meets both the operational demands of a high-use facility and the exacting standards required for elite cricket development.

Cristian Durant, Owner, and Managing Director explained, “Rob Ferley and Square One Cricket set out with the ambition of creating a truly unique and innovative cricket centre. Their vision was to develop something different from the typical facility, incorporating the latest ball-tracking technology alongside floor markings and canvas screens to enable precise bowling and batting training.”

Important to note that Rob Ferley is a co-founder and performance lead at Square One Cricket, including the Square One Cricket Academy delivered in partnership with the University of Brighton. In practical terms, Rob Ferley is responsible for shaping the coaching philosophy, player-development model and high-performance environment that underpins Square One. He is a former professional cricketer who played county cricket for Kent and Nottinghamshire, before moving into coaching and cricket education. Following his playing career, he developed a strong reputation for progressive, player-centred coaching, with a focus on learning, decision-making and long-term development rather than short-term selection outcomes.

At Square One, Rob Ferley co-founded the programme alongside Sir Rod Aldridge and Dr James Wallis, helping to create an inclusive, high-performance cricket pathway that allows students to combine university study with elite training. He is widely recognised for challenging traditional talent pathways and for advocating an approach where potential, access and development are prioritised over early exclusion, a philosophy that sits at the heart of the Square One Cricket Academy at Brighton.

Taraflex® Performance SL was specified for this iconic project as it can withstand high impact ball bounce, support quick movement and repeated use, whilst keeping athletes safe and comfortable with all the benefits of:

- **True and consistent ball bounce**, which is critical for replicating match-like conditions and enabling realistic training scenarios. This consistency allows players to develop technical skills, timing and decision-making with confidence, ensuring practice translates effectively into competitive performance.
- **Excellent shock absorption**, helping to reduce impact stress on joints and muscles during intensive batting, bowling, and fielding drills. This enhanced protection supports player welfare, reduces fatigue during prolonged sessions, and contributes to injury prevention across frequent, high-load training schedules.
- **Durable, high-performance surface**, engineered to cope with sustained use, heavy footfall, and repeated ball impact without compromising performance. Its long-term resilience makes it suitable for intensive daily training environments, supporting athletes at all levels while maintaining consistent performance over time.

Commenting further on the project Cristian Durant said, “The indoor centre is open to everyone through gym-style membership plans and also maintains strong links with the University of Brighton, particularly the Falmer campus where the facility is located.”

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Michael Evans concluded, "The client is extremely pleased with the new Gerflor Taraflex sports flooring. We've been to the site many times since the install, and the lanes are being used constantly, and the performance has been enjoyed by everyone training and playing on this world class indoor sports floorcovering. The facility has been extremely well received by players and coaches alike, with consistent positive feedback highlighting the quality of the playing surface and overall training environment."

Facilities at the centre include nine-lane indoor cricket nets with full 18-metre run-ups, ball tracking technology with advanced bowling machines and two indoor cricket courts. At around 2,200 square metres, the Square One Cricket Academy is larger than both Lord's Indoor Cricket Centre and the National Cricket Performance Centre at Loughborough University.

Cristian Durant also added, "Rob Ferley has achieved everything he set out to accomplish and more. The centre features coloured flooring segments to indicate different bowling lengths, various coloured Spark canvas screens for dedicated batting practice, and the latest ball-tracking technology from Arc Simulations. This technology has since been installed at several of the country's leading county cricket grounds."

Cristian Durant ended by saying, "The Gerflor Taraflex® Sports flooring solution has performed exceptionally well since installation and continues to stand up to constant, heavy day-to-day use. Despite the intensity and frequency of training sessions, the surface has maintained its performance characteristics, providing consistent ball response, excellent underfoot comfort and a high level of durability. It has proven to be a robust, reliable solution that fully supports the demands of a high-performance cricket environment."

Supporting Information

Gerflor Company Overview

Gerflor is a leading manufacturer of comprehensive flooring solutions for sports and educational facilities, offering a range of products including vinyl, linoleum, and carpets. Gerflor's innovative flooring systems help create functional, durable, and visually appealing environments, while also enhancing and protecting educational and sports interiors. Gerflor's flooring solutions are designed to extend the lifespan of facilities, reduce long-term maintenance costs, and ensure safety and accessibility for all users. Gerflor works closely with the education and sports sectors to provide tailored flooring solutions that meet the specific needs of these dynamic environments.

Overview of Gerflor products installed at the University of Brighton

Taraflex® Performance SL (Sustainable Looselay) Sports Vinyl Flooring

A new member to the Taraflex® Olympic pedigree sports flooring family, a sustainable choice down to its unique sustainable attributes including its product construction, recycled content, ease with which it can be reused and recycled at end of life, as well as reduced cleaning and maintenance requirements for the lifetime of the floor. This innovative product is revolutionising the industry with its glue-free installation, even on damp subfloors.

Taraflex® Performance SL is a high-performance vinyl sports flooring solution designed specifically for multi-sport and elite training environments where safety, durability and consistent play are essential. Engineered with a permanent foam backing for enhanced comfort and protection, it delivers reliable impact absorption and excellent underfoot support to help reduce player fatigue and injury risk during intensive use. With outstanding resistance to wear and abrasion, Taraflex® Performance SL maintains consistent performance over time, while its advanced surface treatment ensures excellent grip, controlled slide, and easy maintenance, making it a proven solution for demanding indoor sports facilities.

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Taraflex® Performance SL also delivers strong sustainability credentials while helping to drive efficiencies on site through its innovative construction and installation technology. Manufactured with a focus on durability and longevity, the floor's extended service life helps reduce replacement cycles and overall material consumption over time. Its factory-bonded foam backing and roll format allow for faster, more efficient installation, reducing labour time, adhesive use and on-site waste compared with more complex build-up systems. This streamlined installation process not only helps programmes stay on track but also lowers disruption and associated energy use on site, making Taraflex® Performance SL a practical choice for projects seeking to balance environmental responsibility with cost and time savings.

Taraflex® Evolution Sports Vinyl flooring

Taraflex® Evolution offers strong sustainability credentials through its long service life, high durability, and reduced need for replacement, making it a responsible choice for sports facilities seeking to lower whole-life environmental impact. Its advanced construction, including re-engineered CXP-HD™ foam technology, helps protect the subfloor and maintain consistent performance over time, reducing material consumption across the building lifecycle. Designed with hygiene and easy maintenance in mind, the surface treatment limits the need for aggressive cleaning chemicals, supporting healthier indoor environments and more sustainable facility management.

In addition to environmental benefits, Taraflex® Evolution delivers tangible on-site time and cost savings through its efficient roll format and proven installation methodology. The integrated construction allows for faster installation compared to multi-layer build-ups, reducing labour time, adhesive use, and on-site waste. This streamlined process minimises disruption to programmes and neighbouring spaces, helping projects stay on schedule while offering reliable performance from first use. For clients and contractors alike, Taraflex® Evolution combines sustainability, installation efficiency, and long-term value in one complete sports flooring solution.

Overall Taraflex sports Vinyl Flooring range summary

The Taraflex® range of products continues to be a popular choice across community centres, sports, fitness, and leisure facilities, as well as education sports halls, throughout the UK, the Republic of Ireland and internationally. Taraflex® sports flooring has a long-standing legacy, having been fitted at every Olympic Games since 1976. Recognised and approved by numerous National and International governing bodies as a world-class indoor sports surface. Ideally suited for both new build projects and refurbishments, Taraflex® boasts exceptional durability and cost-effectiveness in maintenance. Over six million children benefit from Taraflex® sports flooring every day, enjoying its versatility for various multi-specialist sports and leisure applications. 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 exercise or play for all ages and all abilities. Taraflex® is the Name Under the Game... It's where Champions Begin, Learn, Train, and Play.

It's noteworthy that Gerflor also offers a diverse range of sports flooring solutions beyond the Taraflex® range. With first-class leading sub-constructions for increased shock absorption, hardwood flooring systems with the Connor brand or linoleum playing surfaces such as the DLW Sports range, there is no facility that cannot be improved with the introduction of a sports surface from Gerflor.

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, or visiting gerflor.co.uk for the latest innovations.

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