

PRIVATE UNIVERSITY PRODUCTS AND NEWS

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**A CENTURY OF
SUCCESS & CHANGES:
BABSON COLLEGE**

**GREEN TIME:
THE BENEFITS OF
OUTDOOR FITNESS**

**FACILITY & SPORT
FLOORING TRENDS**

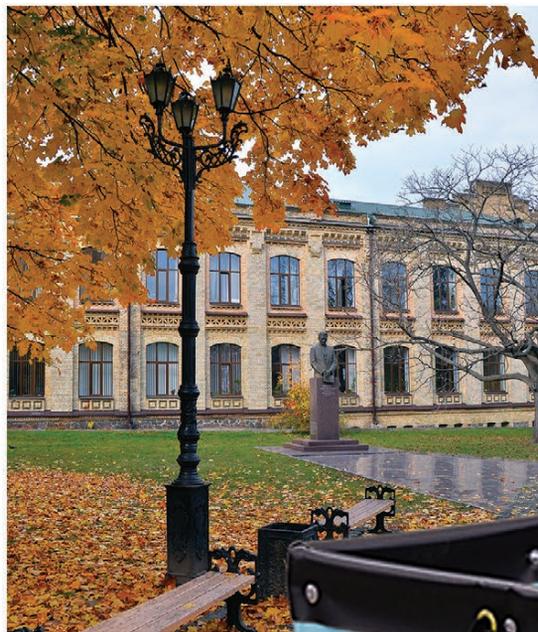
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Freedom Walkway connects a community

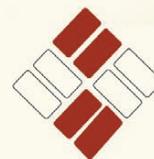
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A CENTURY OF SUCCESS & CHANGES: BABSON COLLEGE

by Cassidy Clevenger

Since 1919, Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, has primarily been known for its entrepreneurship and MBA programs; however, the culture of the college shows a comprehensive grasp concerning the importance of recreation's impact on developing well-rounded students, thus preparing these future moguls for their careers. 2019 marks Babson's centennial anniversary, and in addition to multiple academic and social celebrations, the college has also debuted its brand new rec center.



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GREEN TIME: EXPLORING THE BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR FITNESS

by Hilary Moreno

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FACILITY & SPORT FLOORING TRENDS

by Jamie Darpel

In the world of sports and fitness, the floor is often a focal point of the building. Whether it is a maple hardwood floor or a colorful synthetic surface, the floor adds tremendous value and is one of the most important pieces of equipment in the room. The sports floor not only adds an element of design with its beautiful, customizable appearance, it also contributes to the protection and safety of the athletes.

A CENTURY OF SUCCESS & CHANGES: Babson College

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Since 1919, Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, has primarily been known for its entrepreneurship and MBA programs; however, the culture of the college shows a comprehensive grasp concerning the importance of recreation's impact on developing well-rounded students, thus preparing these future moguls for their careers. 2019 marks Babson's centennial anniversary, and in addition to multiple academic and social celebrations, the college has also debuted its brand new rec center. Just as the college teaches its business students the importance of wise investments, Babson actively invests in the students' well-being and personal successes.





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Babson's Recreation Amenities

The Babson Recreation and Athletics Complex (BRAC) is a 176,870-square foot addition that has been added to the existing Webster Center. The \$50 million project started breaking ground for the new facility in the Spring of 2017, and was officially opened to the students and faculty in Fall 2019.

BRAC is a modern, state-of-the-art, two-story center comprised of a large, 10,000-square foot fitness center, multipurpose rooms, as well as club and intra-mural sport opportunities. BRAC's new multi-purpose facility has nearly doubled Babson's athletic and recreation amenities. As a result of the new construction, there is an additional three-court gym that is large enough to host campus-wide events, such as student orientation, career fairs, conferences, and concerts.

Babson aimed to create a rec center that would have something for all of the students to enjoy. For the students who are not varsity athletes, there are still plenty of options for recreation: club sports, yoga, aerobics classes, Zumba, and martial arts to name a few. Furthermore, the new space also accommodates socialization by offering gathering areas where students can relax with their friends before or after their workouts and games.

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In addition to the construction of BRAC, Babson has also renovated the locker rooms and lobby at the existing Webster Center; the Webster Center offers students a Track Mezzanine, a fitness center with new Sorinex strength racks, a racquetball court, and a squash court. As part of the reconstruction, the Webster Fitness Center has installed an improved sound system, new rubber flooring, synthetic surf, mirrors, and a fresh coat of paint in the fitness center. In March 2018, Babson opened their new Van Winkle tennis courts, which gave student athletes an additional space for practice and competition. Since BRAC's opening, eight more full-sized outdoor tennis courts have been built.

Babson took into consideration the particular needs of their student athletes, and therefore decided to build varsity athletes' dedicated team rooms for their various sports, advanced weight training equipment, and improved spaces for sports medicine assistance. The Bravo Family Sports Medicine suite offers innovative technology, such as hydrotherapy, to their student athletes, and can support the students' recovery from any number of injuries. Furthermore, within Bravo Sports Medicine, Babson also offers their student athletes access to the Romanzi Rehabilitation Clinic, which can further assist the students after an injury.



MicroFit, Inc. has been producing quality Fitness / Wellness assessment software and medical grade testing equipment since 1986. Several hundred colleges / universities have benefited by using a wide range of MicroFit products designed to:

- 1.** Provide comprehensive, easy to use, Fitness Profile software for campus recreation, human performance labs, Kinesiology – Sports Science classes, and for a growing number of personal training certification courses.
- 2.** Provide a comprehensive Wellness Profile Questionnaire to identify specific lifestyle behaviors with constructive recommendations on how to improve one's overall wellness score.

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4. Provide a full range of quality fitness testing equipment, including their advanced FAS-2 System with integrated accessories which have been a part of MicroFit's product development for over 30 years.

In summary, Fitness / Wellness Assessments are now considered one of the "best practices" to enhance an overall campus life experience; with HealthWizard software, group analytics can also allow organizations to create "evidenced based outcomes" to assess the results from their investment in staff, facilities / equipment, as well as their overall health promotions and wellness programming efforts.



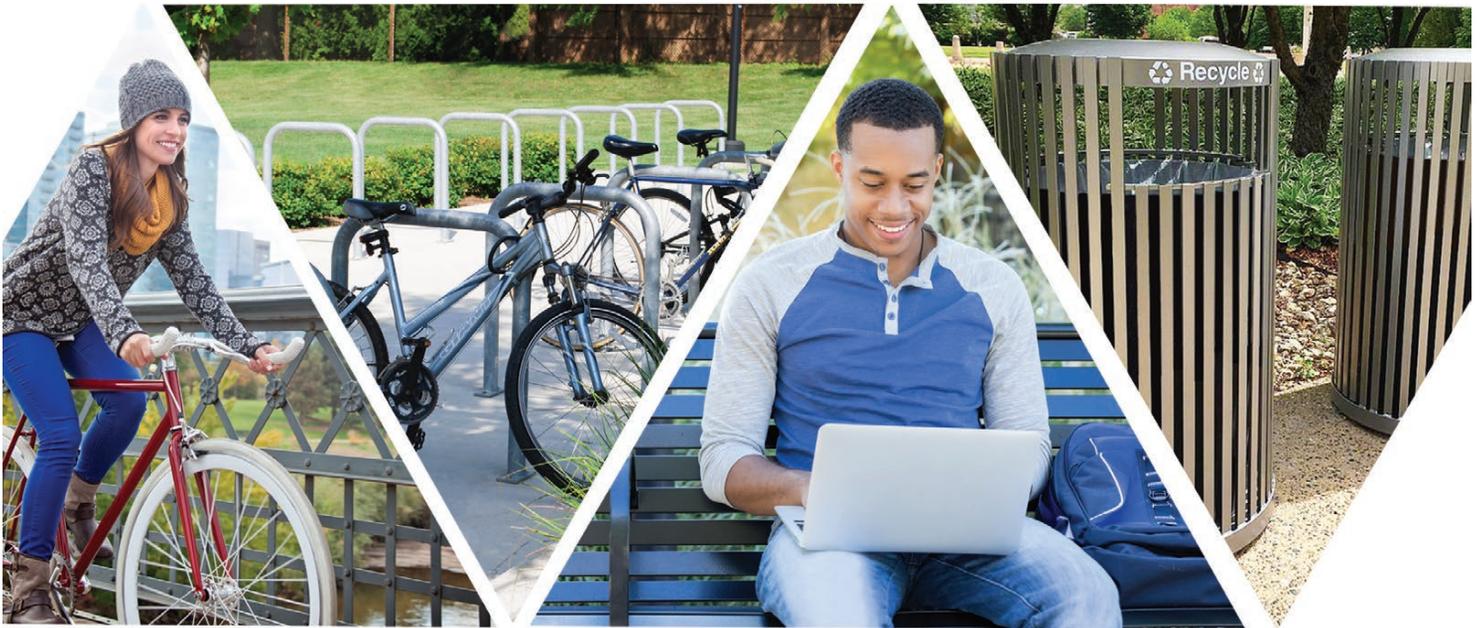
Student Athletes, Past and Present

Athletics Director, Mike Lynch, spoke with pride and exuberance about Babson's student athletes, both former and current. For current students, prior to the construction of BRAC, varsity athletes shared training spaces with the rest of the students at Babson; now, the Webster Center can be used primarily by Babson students, while student athletes can train according to their specific needs at BRAC.

Babson is a NCAA Division III school with an impressive, competitive history dating back to 1920. At Babson's Centennial Celebration this past September, the college inducted five national championship teams into their Hall of Fame from men's soccer, men's ice hockey, and men's basketball. Babson's first national championship title was earned in 1975, and most recently, the men's basketball team earned an NCAA Division III national title in 2017.

Additionally, the basketball team has won numerous other New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (NEWMAC) championships over the past few years. Other teams, such as the women's basketball team have a long history of success, including making it to the NCAA tournament ten times, as well as attending the Sweet 16 three times. Lynch believes the new spaces for varsity athletes will further foster the talent and drive the student athletes are bringing to the twenty-two varsity programs at Babson.

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Challenges

Though sharing space at Webster was not a new challenge for the students and faculty at Babson, during the construction parking difficulties did prove to be quite the hurdle to overcome, according to Lynch. The college did attempt to minimize the inconvenience that any major construction brings by doing the bulk of the building during the Summer semester.

Future for College Sports at Babson

Lynch spoke highly about the student athletes as well as everyone involved in the massive renovation and construction projects at Babson. Many of the students at Babson have an “entrepreneurial mindset,” according to *Babson Thought and Action*. The mutual dedication and respect students share with their institution, coaches, and instructors highlight the camaraderie and fortitude required to be successful in the business world; teamwork is paramount for leadership, and the experience Babson’s recreation facilities are able to provide the students is further shaping them into the impactful, efficient leaders they will become.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Cassidy Clevenger is a Samford University alum. She is currently in graduate school at Samford in the MSW program, while working as a staff writer.

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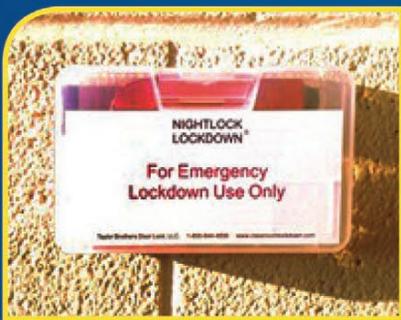
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**EXPLORING THE BENEFITS
OF OUTDOOR FITNESS**

by Hilary Moreno

The average American spends almost 90% of their day inside according to a National Human Activity Pattern Survey by Neil E. Klepeis et al. Whether inside a building or a car, we are sheltered from the natural world but at what cost? Current research is offering a more complete picture of the far-reaching health benefits, both mentally and physically, of spending a greater amount of time outside. Campuses, realizing the importance of helping students stay healthy and active, are looking for ways to promote green time as a natural and easily accessible addition to their outdoor spaces.

Why Outside?

Sadly, I spend about 90% of my weekdays inside, but this past weekend I was at a lake in northern Tennessee at a triathlon. The morning was cold and the lake was covered in low-lying fog, the birds just beginning to find their songs, and the colors shifted from quiet blue-gray to brilliant streaks of sunrise colors.

Nothing makes me stop and appreciate my life quite like getting outside. Nothing forces me into the present moment in the same nurturing way. It calms my mind and restarts me when nothing else does.

Generations of humans were hunter-gatherers and relied heavily on the outdoors for sustenance and survival. Now that we spend 90% of our day inside, Gladwell et al. in *The Great Outdoors: How a Green Exercise Environment Can Benefit All* notes that we are no longer mentally or physically stimulated in the same way. Gladwell suggests, "We are all born with an emotional affiliation for other living organisms, i.e. nature loving, which may mean as part of our genetic makeup we are innately predisposed to desire nature contact, and thus

maybe green exercise should be used to facilitate physical activity to improve health." We have become detached from nature and that loss may be more harmful to our health than we realize.

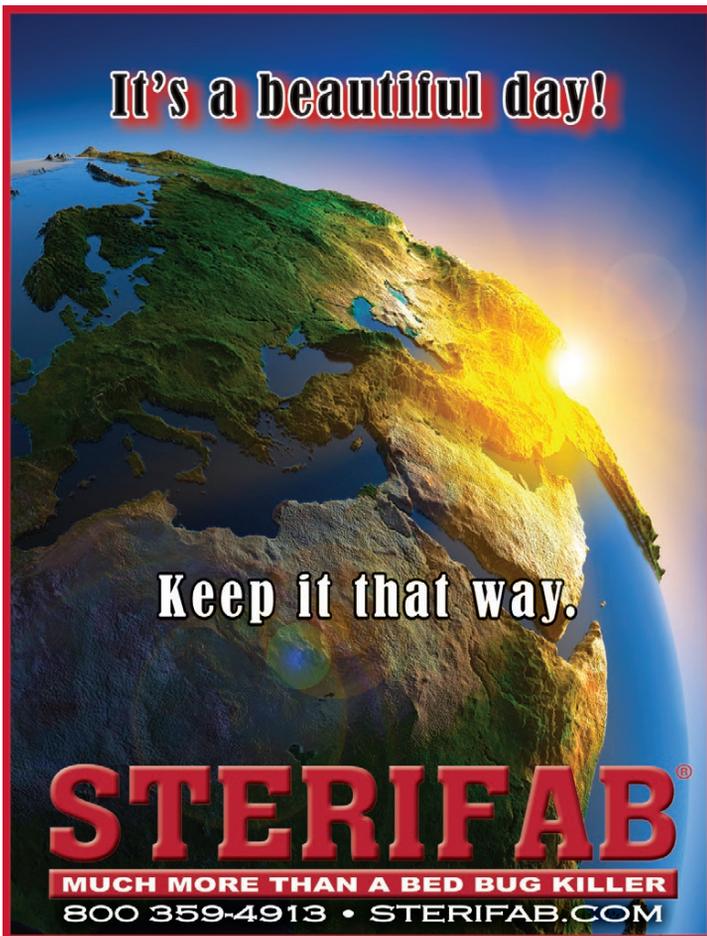
Gladwell et al. notes that in Japan, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands easy access to green space has been shown to improve mental health, quality of life, and increased longevity, and that's not even necessarily adding exercise to the mix—it's just the overall benefit of spending more time in nature.

Added Benefits of Green Fitness

Decades worth of research has proven the health benefits of regular physical activity, so why should it matter if you're in a gym or on a trail? Multiple studies argue that people who exercise outdoors are more likely to repeat that behavior and for a longer amount of time than when they are participating in the same activity inside. In addition, Gladwell et al. found that green fitness has been shown to reduce stress levels, restore mental fatigue, improve overall mood and self-esteem, and increase the enjoyment of physical activity on a regular basis.

Akers et al. in *Visual Color Perception in Green Exercise: Positive Effects on Mood and Perceived Exertion* observe that visual and cognitive input from nature may be enough to distract us from difficult physical tasks such as exercise. They state, "It is likely that promoting attention to an external pleasant and green environment reduces awareness of physiologic sensations and negative emotions, thus minimizing the perception of effort and making exercise seem easier." Inside a gym, however, the same effort is perceived as more strenuous.

Furthermore, exposure to sunlight means a greater synthesis of vitamin D in the body. Allison Abel with Greenfield Outdoor Fitness notes that a 2018 meta-analysis of studies documenting the positive health benefits of time spent in the outdoors included decreased heart rate, diastolic blood pressure, and incidence of type II diabetes as some of the key benefits. Just as importantly, an ongoing deficiency of vitamin D can lead to fatigue, depression, muscle pain, obesity, hypertension, osteoporosis, neurodegenerative diseases and possibly some forms of cancer.



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Attraction vs Promotion

Universities have multiple options for creating inviting green spaces, and potential students and parents are paying attention to the overall visual and physical environment of on-campus life. By offering outdoor fitness options that are accessible all hours of the day, every day of the year, campuses are opening up unstructured opportunities for students and faculty to engage in multiple levels of physical activity at any point in their day.

An off-shoot benefit of incorporating outdoor fitness facilities on to a campus is that seeing people participate in exercise in an open and welcoming environment can be a motivating factor for others passing by.

There's a sense of community and social interaction in outdoor fitness that adds to the positivity, enjoyment, and escapism of exercising in a green space. Participants are more likely to exert a higher level of energy, spend more time being active, and experience lower levels of stress than their gym-bound counterparts.



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Leverage-based Fitness Benefits

Abel addresses the fact that outdoor fitness options can be a safer choice for regular workouts especially for students who may have limited experience with an indoor gym environment or a sense of how much resistance or weight is appropriate for their individual abilities. The resistance setting for leverage-based fitness equipment is defined by the percentage of the student's body weight—as opposed to how much a student thinks they can handle—thereby greatly reducing the possibility of injury. Able concludes, "It's a simple introduction to physical training, and once they are comfortable and build up their overall strength, they can progress to activities on more complex and challenging fitness units."

Why Invest in Outdoor Equipment?

Investing in outdoor fitness equipment may allow already existent, but tightly-scheduled athletic space to be available for additional classes and team practices that are better suited for the indoor environment. In addition, there is no need for climate control or for staff to be present—it's self-sufficient in many ways.

There are multiple obstacles, real and perceived, that potential gym users face when considering their exercise

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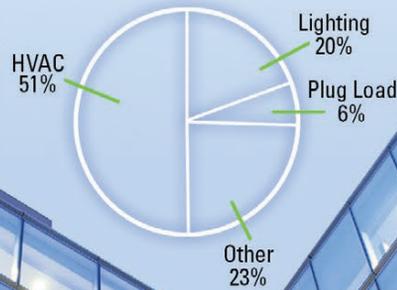


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Decades worth of research has proven the health benefits of regular physical activity, so why should it matter if you're in a gym or on a trail? Multiple studies argue that people who exercise outdoors are more likely to repeat that behavior and for a longer amount of time than when they are participating in the same activity inside.

options. Abel explains, "These include the indoor environment (which those with no experience often find intimidating), the idea of exercising alone, lack of knowledge of how to use the machines, and fear of injury." Here's where the unique nature of green fitness is able to overcome some of these obstacles for hesitant students.

Overcoming Fitness Obstacles

Abel asserts that the outdoor environment—with wide-open space and the absence of wall-to-wall mirrors—generates an atmosphere that novice users may find more comfortable.

Additionally, an outdoor fitness area promotes socialization "due to both its casual outdoor setting and because it's better positioned to attract diverse demographics." Typically, green fitness areas are more enticing to a wider genre of users such as older adults and individuals with varying physical abilities. Many outdoor fitness areas also offer wheelchair accessible equipment. Plus, outdoor machines are generally simpler and more intuitive to operate. And finally, the majority of green fitness machines feature body-weight leverage systems which can minimize the possibility of injury.

Due to the flexibility of which machines to include, outdoor equipment can be easily adapted to any size area whether it's tucked in between dorms or spread out beside practice fields. Offering green fitness equipment in close proximity to pre-existing sports areas provides additional opportunities for college athletes to warm up before games and practices without having to take time switching from one location to another.

On a broader scale, Abel believes if the campus allows the equipment to be available to the surrounding community, the fitness area can have a far-reaching positive impact on overall community health as well as connecting the on-campus students and local residents. Creating a campus environment that promotes and invites a healthy, active green lifestyle not only supports current students and faculty, but could be a deciding factor for potential incoming students as well.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Hilary Moreno is an alum of Birmingham-Southern College. Currently, she is the Creative Director and a staff writer for Flaherty Media.

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FACILITY & SPORT FLOORING TRENDS

by Jamie Darpel

In the world of sports and fitness, the floor is often a focal point of the building. Whether it is a maple hardwood floor or a colorful synthetic surface, the floor adds tremendous value and is one of the most important pieces of equipment in the room.



Beautiful and Customizable

The sports floor not only adds an element of design with its beautiful, customizable appearance, it also contributes to the protection and safety of the athletes. That being said, many of the high quality sports floors on the market can last decades before they need to be replaced. So how does a floor that lasts a lifetime keep up with new trends?

To understand the role that sports flooring plays in this fast-paced, ever evolving world, you have to think outside of the box. Or in this case, outside of the floor.

There are 5 trends that keep sports flooring relevant and essential in today's facilities, outlined in detail here.

User Experience

UX is all the rage and is one of the biggest buzzwords mentioned in 2019. It incorporates all the interactions users have with a facility, from before they walk into the facility, to the time they leave. So how does athletic flooring play a role in UX?

Maple hardwood flooring is no longer limited to the area beneath our feet. Facilities are increasingly adding flair to the walls by using maple hardwood as art, allowing fans to be fully submersed in the experience.

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There is no shortage of flooring options that are sustainable and environmentally friendly on the market. However, as more and more facilities are renovated, the disposal or repurposing of “old” materials is becoming just as important as the new materials that are selected.

So the question of “What can we do with old flooring?” is asked more frequently. While we have seen repurposed items such as furniture made from recycled flooring for some time now, we are beginning to see more demand for items like fan memorabilia and jewelry made from recycled flooring as well.

This option not only provides an outlet to repurpose old flooring, it also serves as a fundraiser for schools by connecting them with alumni and fans who may purchase the treasured memorabilia for their own collections.

Vinyl Floor Graphics

As the walls are being covered in maple flooring, we are also seeing an increase in vinyl graphics covering the walls, as well as the floor. Permanent vinyl graphics for gym floors are growing in demand among colleges and universities.

Not only do these graphics go down quickly to save time on installation, their printing capabilities are endless. Bland logos and 2-color mascots painted on the gym floor are getting upgraded to full color, unique designs on vinyl.

Schools are able to make their gymnasium stand out and wow every fan in the stand on game day with graphics that really pop and represent the unique qualities of the school.

Photo of Redbud Fitness and Lifestyle Center, Pickleball Courts courtesy of Foster Specialty Floors

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Space Flexibility

Fitness and rec facilities are always looking for ways to increase usage and bring in additional revenue. One of the most recent and fast growing trends in sports is the addition of pickleball. For new construction facilities, courts specifically made for pickleball are now available by a few manufacturers. For facilities that want to add pickleball to their current offerings, pickleball court lines can easily be painted on hardwood or synthetic floors.

Regardless of the added sport or activity, it is clear that facilities need a space that allows for flexibility to accommodate the addition of programs with ease to fit the changing needs of their members.

Safer Solutions

As sports continue to attract younger athletes and clubs allow for year-round play, it is no surprise that the longterm protection of an athlete is becoming more important than ever. It is also no surprise that injuries are increasing in young athletes from overuse.

In a survey released by NATA this past June, they found that only half of collegiate-level sports programs are following the “Medical Model of Care for Student-Athletes” issued by their association.

The awareness of creating a safer environment for athletes is becoming more of a priority and concern. Sports floors that are designed to protect athletes are one of many critical components that contribute to athlete safety.

Key manufacturers of sports floor systems understand this concern and have continued to design better floor systems that offer higher levels of protection. This is a trend that will only continue to increase as the demand for sports continues to surge as well.

The Heart of the School

While new trends don’t emerge often in the sports flooring world, one thing is certain: the sports floor or gymnasium is the heart of the school and will always be a focal point for the teams and the fans in the stands.

For this reason, the floor will always play a significant role in the design, functionality, and purpose of all recreational facilities.



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jamie Darpel is the Marketing Manager for Robbins Sports Surfaces (www.robbinsfloor.com), a division of Robbins, Inc. She is in her seventh year leading the marketing efforts at Robbins and has over 12 years of experience as a marketing professional. She holds a BA from Northern Kentucky University.

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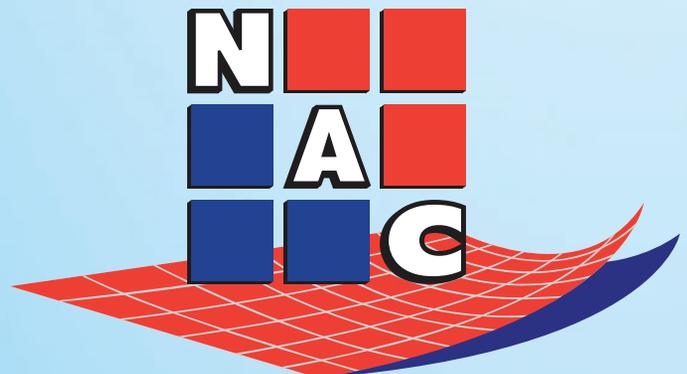
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