





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.

As they are surrounded by the maple on the walls, fans can feel and smell the gym flooring which evokes strong memories and emotions of their own high school gym class days.

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

Recycled and Enviro-friendly Flooring

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.

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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.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jamie Darpel is the Marketing Manager for Robbins Sports Surfaces (www.robbsfloor.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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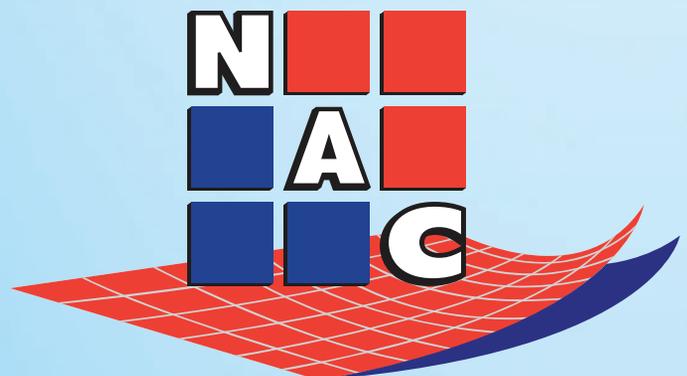
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