



The interactive wall at the British Open with three grades of glass floor. Note the video playing on the floor

ASB BACKING GLASS FLOORS

"The future is glass," says ASB marketing manager Petr Schmidl. We have certainly got used to it with squash court walls, which have revolutionised spectating, TV and photographic coverage, writes Ian McKenzie.

Think, though, of the advantages of a glass floor. Underlit with LED lines, the court becomes a beautiful and complete gleaming glass cube.

There are a whole range of possibilities available for displaying the score, logos, branding and even video. "We can even make the floor a coaching tool," enthuses Schmidl.

ASB has already installed glass floors at the Oxford University Sports Hall and at BT Sport's television centre in London's Olympic Park.

At the touch of a screen, the court or sports hall lines can be changed, transforming the area for a different activity.

"Sports floors must be sprung," explains Schmidl. LumiFlex floors have solved this problem, with the glass floor panels sitting in an aluminium frame with rubber cushions. Security glass solves any safety concerns.

The key challenge, certainly for squash, is how the floor handles moisture (i.e. sweat) and humid conditions.

Innovations have moved the court floor on from the nasty experience at the 2007 World Open in Bermuda, where it became slippery in humid conditions.

At this year's British Open ASB built a demonstration glass-floor platform alongside the interactive squash wall, on which players and spectators could test the floor's grip.

Ceramic dots provided dimples to allow somewhere for any moisture to flow away, but the key to the project is to get the right amount of grip and sweat resistance, while still allowing players to dive without it being prohibitively abrasive. Schmidl favours the middle grade as a compromise between grip and safe diving.

The next step in glass-floor innovation is to build a complete floor and test it in a tournament situation.

• For further information, see www.asbglassfloor.com and facebook.com/MSquashShaunMoxham/

ENGLAND'S JUNIOR TEAM

Nine-time winners England have announced a four-man squad for the World Junior Men's Team Championship to be held in Chennai, India, from July 24 to 29.

Nick Wall, James Wyatt, Jared Carter and Sam Todd are the quartet, with Lee Drew and Chris Ryder managing the team.

Curtis Malik and Josh Owen have also been chosen for the individual event, which runs alongside the junior women's championship from July 18 to 23, when Lucy Turmel, Elise Lazarus and Alice Green will represent England.



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