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The gable ends were specifically designed and installed at Newcastle Falcons Rugby Club, UK, to fit the new stands and provide extra weather protection to the team's fans

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# Relocating with long term benefits

From indoor training halls through to stadium grandstands, relocatable structures have come of age in the global sports market

Neil Forsyth, Rubb Sports Buildings, UK

One of the country's leading manufacturers of relocatable buildings, Rubb Buildings of Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, is further enhancing its reputation in the design and construction of sports halls and stands. As reported in previous issues of *Stadia*, Rubb has recently completed one of the largest indoor football facilities in Europe – the Soccarena at Durham City Football Club in the north of England. This comprises eight 6-a-side pitches and an amenity block, which includes men's and women's changing rooms with disabled access, a café, kitchen, conference room and bar, first-aid room and offices. Substantial savings were made to the overall build cost because they were able to incorporate all these amenities within the 138 x 50m building.

## Northern lights

Soccarena followed on from the company's highly successful construction of indoor training

The Soccarena, Durham, UK, is recognised as one of the largest facilities of its type in Europe

The brand new indoor tennis centre for Chesterfield Lawn Tennis Club

facilities for Newcastle United at the club's Longbenton base. The 67 x 90m building houses a full-sized football pitch, allowing training regardless of the weather. One of the key features of the indoor facilities is the way natural light is allowed in through the translucent roof. Natural lighting not only saves on energy costs but provides a brighter and more appealing sports-activity environment than artificially lit structures. The utilization of a Rubb building for soccer has been so successful that the company is currently in discussion with a number of leading football clubs regarding the development of other indoor facilities and football academies.

## Game, set and match

One of its most recent sports' building contracts was at Chesterfield Lawn Tennis Club, where the company has just completed the construction of a new indoor tennis centre. The new centre is based in one of Rubb's BVE buildings, is 50m in length with a 38m span and 5.25 sidewalls, and includes three full-size courts. The club had been looking for a covered centre for some time; with a specification formulated by a consultant appointed by the Lawn Tennis Association, a tender document was prepared and subsequently Rubb were awarded the contract.

In addition to meeting the LTA specification for ventilation and lighting, and providing all services, the centre has been constructed with steel-clad sidewalls, special firewalls and curtain walling. Periphery curtains and dividing nets separate the individual courts. A feature of particular interest is a partially glazed gable end wall, but the real versatility of the structure is that it has been constructed as an extension to the existing Clubhouse, which itself has been renovated.

Paul Hatton, head coach at Chesterfield Lawn Tennis Club comments, "Rubb Buildings have been an excellent company to work with. They have provided Chesterfield Lawn Tennis Club with a state-of-the-art indoor sports facility; we are all highly delighted with the arena. The three new indoor courts allow the club to open and function all year round whatever the weather."

> Natural lighting not only saves on energy costs but provides a brighter and more appealing sports-activity environment than artificially lit structures

## Looking after the fans

As well as protecting the player from the elements, the company has extended its expertise to the spectator. With the comparatively recent professionalism of Rugby Football, many clubs have had to extend their grounds to cope with an influx of spectators, none more so perhaps than the Newcastle Falcons, whose fly-half Jonny Wilkinson is best remembered for his drop goal which won the Rugby World Cup for England. At the Falcons' ground at Kingston Park on the northern outskirts of Newcastle, Rubb has specifically designed and installed gable ends to the new stands to give extra weather protection to the team's fans.

## American stakes

Over in the United States, associate company Rubb Inc of Maine has been equally successful in diversifying its product range of relocatable buildings into the sports hall market. To date, major contracts have been completed at Gorham Maine for an indoor multi-sports facility, at Acton, California for a gymnasium, and Brooklyn, New York for another indoor multi-sports facility.

One project of particular interest has been the physical relocation of a sports building. Originally erected in Boston, Massachusetts, the indoor facility was relocated to York, Maine, where it was re-erected and lengthened. This is now a first-class sports amenity measuring 30m wide by 71m long.

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## Branching out

The company's successful entry into the market for sports buildings has been based on two key points – the first, its experience in pioneering the design and manufacture of relocatable buildings over a 35-year period, and the second, the quality of the product itself. Rubb produces relocatable structures for general warehousing, ports and marine applications, the aviation industry, and in more recent times for the military – a wealth of experience that has served the company well in its new venture.

With regard to the product itself, only top quality materials are used in the manufacture. Each sports building comprises a galvanized frame with a UPVC translucent membrane. Postproduction hot-dip galvanizing of all welded components insures that steel surfaces inside and out are protected from corrosion – thus the customer is guaranteed low lifetime maintenance, superior structural integrity and enhanced performance. The translucent membrane is made from high-strength, heavy weighted architectural fabric. Many Rubb structures are still in use with the original membrane after a quarter of a century.

Because its sports buildings essentially comprise a frame and membrane cover, foundation work is simplified, resulting in a quick and easy-to-erect building. One key additional benefit of the system is efficient space utilization. The truss frame system allows for clear span space and high vertical walls to suit many sports activities. This was of particular importance in the construction of Soccarena, where the height of the building rises sharply from the side walls to allow full use of the stadium for throw-ins and corners. Multi-span linked buildings cover large areas using far fewer columns than in other types of construction. Furthermore, its sports buildings can be effectively insulated, heated or air-conditioned to provide a perfect sports playing environment, whatever the weather outside.

Rubb sales manager Ray Colby comments, "the construction of sports halls is rapidly becoming one of our major markets." He adds, "flexibility of design, speed of construction and overall cost make a relocatable building hard to beat for any chosen sport." ■

Originally erected in Boston, Massachusetts, the indoor facility was relocated to York, Maine, where it was re-erected and lengthened to over 71m long.