

# Sport for all

Flexible and fast to build, Rubb's versatile facilities continue to bring the benefits of sport to the masses

Ian Patterson for Rubb Sports Buildings, UK

**V**iewed as vital to improving the health of the population, reducing crime and creating the next generation of sporting heroes, the sporting activity of the general public is high on the political agenda. To meet these targets, a greater provision of community sports facilities is required.

One such facility is York University's new state-of-the-art sports centre extension opened to the public in January 2006. As part of a massive sports expansion programme at the university, Rubb Buildings was commissioned to construct a high-tech, BVE-type building, which has been built onto the side of the existing sports centre at the Heslington Lane campus, York, UK.

Measuring 55m in length, 40m wide and with 5m-high sidewalls, the hall is fitted out with a high-spec dehumidification system, which cuts down on condensation in cold weather. The multipurpose building is accessible to the people of York, as well as the university's students.

"To date the university has had an excellent record in allowing the community access to its sports facilities," says

Colin Smith, the university's director of physical recreation. "For example, Heslington Squash Club has been based here for 30 years, Heslington Trampoline Club, the Yorkshire disabled cricket team, Norwich Union Teams, Knavesmire Harriers and York City Football Academy are a few of the groups using the facilities on a regular basis."

"The limiting factor has been the lack of sufficient facilities to enable this policy to be extended and regrettably, some requests to book in the past have had to be refused."

## Activity partner

The new multisports arena is equivalent to three sports halls and also houses a dance studio and a 47-station fitness suite. The galvanised steel framed hall, with PVC-coated polyester semi-translucent membrane provides a lighter, brighter and more appealing environment than provided by other structures. One of the major benefits of this type of structure is the ability to run a number

of different activities simultaneously. The hall can quickly and easily be divided into thirds by demountable rebound boards and netting. Each third can accommodate indoor football, futsal, indoor hockey, netball, basketball, tennis, volleyball, badminton, and martial arts.

The centre also features a Taraflex floor, a popular choice for stadia at the last Olympic Games. The second phase of the project will see a 3G artificial football pitch being completed and opened in 2007.

To get the ball rolling, a corporate five-a-side football league has been set up with the university organising the fixtures and providing FA-qualified referees.

The university is hoping the new facilities will open up the possibility for other indoor leagues, including hockey, netball and futsal.



[This page] York University's new state-of-the-art sports centre extension [Right] York University's multisports centre is equivalent to three sports halls – it can be partitioned into thirds to accommodate a variety of activities at the same time





The Soccarena, Durham, UK, where football stars of the future enjoy the purpose-built facilities that are on offer

## Soccarena

Rubb Buildings has an impressive track record for production of communal sports arenas. As well as multisports venues, it has built sport-specific arenas such as the Soccarena in Durham – “the finest indoor football facility in Europe,” claims Soccarena’s chairman, Stewart Dawson.

Dawson and his associates had the idea of building a massive indoor football complex that could accommodate up to eight, six-a-side pitches that were usable all year round.

At the time, Rubb was in the process of completing a new indoor training ground for Newcastle United at the

and ourselves we have really pioneered the design in six-a-side facilities.”

For the Soccarena, the original plan was for the amenity block to be built outside the indoor area, however after consultation between the design team at Rubb and the client, the decision was taken to extend the building by six metres to a length of 138m, to include all the amenities under one roof, while at the same time maintaining the original sizes of the football pitches.

So a ‘building within a building’ was constructed – to include male and female changing rooms with disabled access, a café, kitchen, conference room and bar, first-aid room and offices. “Due to the fact

“As with as any pioneering project, there were hurdles to overcome, however Rubb was able to hand over the structure to the client with practical completion in just over three months.”

The Rubb Soccarena is 138m long by 50m wide, with 6m-high steel clad sidewalls; and at its highest point the building is 14.5m high. Considerable thought had to be given to the design of the metal beam structures to obtain as much height as possible above the steel-clad walls, with the height of the building rising sharply from the side walls to allow full use of the stadium for throw-ins and corners.

“The Rubb team couldn’t have been more helpful,” commented Dawson. “The group really was by our side from start to finish, even getting involved in areas of the contract that were not Rubb’s direct responsibility. It even

manufactured the seating for our changing rooms and advised on emergency exit doors.”

Soccarena is one of the largest sports halls in the world dedicated to football in the community with the coaching being overseen by qualified coaches and ex-professional players. The facility runs both girls’ and boys’ and ladies’ and men’s leagues, along with special after-school coaching and weekend coaching. It is



The designs are so versatile that many different sports can benefit from the construction methods

club’s Longbenton base. The 67 x 90m facility was to house a full-size football pitch to allow training regardless of the weather. Dawson visited the site several times during the construction – and was suitably impressed. “The quality of Rubb’s product; the company’s track record and their professional level of service left me in no doubt that they would be my preferred supplier. Between Rubb

that we were able to incorporate all these amenities under the umbrella of our stadium, there have been substantial savings to the overall build cost,” says Dawson, “especially on the roofing of the amenity block.”

Such an approach was not without its challenges: “Because of the ‘building within’ our facility, we had to meet the most stringent of fire regulations,” comments Rubb’s sales manager, Ray Colby.



This sports facility, which was originally built in Boston, Massachusetts, was relocated, re-erected and lengthened in York, Maine, USA

available to all the public on a one-hourly booking basis per pitch. "It is great to have such a facility in the North East," continues Dawson. "Situated just off the A1 at Carville, Durham, UK, it is perfectly placed to become a regional centre for football in the North East."

### Versatile design

Rubb's building designs are so versatile that many different sports can benefit from the construction methods. In 2005 Rubb developed a new indoor tennis centre for Chesterfield Lawn Tennis Club. Based in one of Rubb's BVE buildings, the centre, which includes three full-size courts, measures 50 x 38m. An important aspect of the project was the ability of the construction to be an extension to the existing clubhouse, allowing the club to open and function all year round. The Club had been looking for a covered playing centre for some time. The Lawn Tennis Club (LTA) appointed a consultant to draft a specification for the tender. Following a successful bid Rubb were awarded the contract.

In addition to meeting the LTA specification for ventilation and lighting, and providing all services, the centre was constructed with steel-clad 5.25m-high sidewalls, special firewalls and curtain walling. Periphery curtains and dividing nets separate the individual courts. The courts

### In the frame

Each Rubb sports building comprises a galvanised frame with a high-strength PVC-coated polyester membrane cladding that is tensioned over the structure. Post-production hot dip galvanising of all welded components to the ASTM A-123 standard ensures that the steel components are protected from corrosion – thereby the customer is guaranteed low lifetime maintenance, superior structural integrity and enhanced performance.

One key additional benefit of the Rubb system is efficient utilisation of space. The truss frame system allows for a clear span and high vertical walls to suit many sports activities. Rubb sports buildings can be effectively insulated, heated or air-conditioned to provide a perfect sports environment.

also feature a partially glazed gable end wall providing a viewing gallery for spectators.

Rubb Buildings has also extended its expertise to protect the spectators and players against the elements. With the increase in attendances for sports such as rugby football, a number of clubs have added all-weather protection for their supporters. One such project has involved the production of a

specially designed and installed gable end to one of the stands for the Newcastle Falcons' Kingston Park Ground.

### Home and away

Rubb's creation of multipurpose sports facilities is not confined to the UK. The company also has an impressive track record of projects across the Atlantic.

Rubb's associate company, Rubb Inc of Maine, USA, has been equally successful in diversifying its product range of relocatable buildings into the sports hall market. Major contracts have been completed at Gorham, Maine, and Brooklyn, New York, for indoor multisports facilities; and Acton, California, for a gymnasium.

The flexibility of Rubb's buildings was emphasised with the actual relocation of a sports building. Originally erected in Boston, Massachusetts, the indoor arena was dismantled and moved to York, Maine, where it was rebuilt and lengthened. This is now a first-class 30 x 71m sports amenity.

The Rubb organisation, with production facilities in Norway, UK and USA, is recognised as a world leader in the design, development and manufacture of relocatable structures and is quality certified to ISO9001: 2000. ■

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