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# Optimizing Squash Court Floor Maintenance for Cost-Effectiveness



Squash court floors, by virtue of the unique demands of the sport, face more challenges than typical sports flooring. Unlike many wooden sports floors, which are sealed to protect against scratches and wear, squash floors require a different approach. A sealed floor, though beneficial for most sports, poses a hazard in squash due to the likelihood of slipping. The rapid and intense movements in squash often lead to sweat droplets on the floor, which, on a sealed surface, can cause players to slip dangerously.

In maintaining wooden squash court floors, it's crucial to distinguish between sealing and impregnation treatments, as they serve different purposes and have distinct impacts on the floor's characteristics.

Sealing refers to the application of a coating, such as varnish or lacquer, on the surface of the wood. This layer acts as a barrier, sealing the pores of the wood. It protects the surface from scratches, wear, and moisture, but also renders the wood less breathable. In squash courts, however, a sealed floor can be problematic as it increases the risk of slipping due to reduced grip, especially when the floor becomes wet with sweat.

On the other hand, impregnation is more akin to an oil treatment that penetrates deep into the wood. Unlike sealing, impregnation doesn't form a coating on the surface. Instead, it fills the internal structure of the wood, enhancing its durability and resistance to moisture from within. Crucially, impregnation leaves the pores open, allowing the wood to remain breathable and retain its natural ability to absorb and release moisture. This quality is particularly beneficial for squash courts as it helps maintain the necessary grip and reduces the risk of slipping.

## The Crucial Role of Deep Impregnation in Extending the Lifespan

In the realm of squash court maintenance, the practice of deep impregnation post-sanding plays a pivotal role in preserving the floor's quality and extending its lifespan. There are instances, however, where this crucial step is overlooked, leading to significant consequences. Floors that are not treated with deep impregnation after sanding lose their grip much more rapidly compared to their treated counterparts. This accelerated degradation necessitates more frequent sanding, sometimes annually, depending on the court's usage. Such increased maintenance not only incurs additional costs but also significantly shortens the overall lifespan of the flooring.

To prevent these issues, it is essential to consult with the supplier of the original flooring. This consultation should focus on identifying the specific type of impregnation used for the wooden squash floor. Each flooring material may have unique requirements and compatibilities with different impregnation products. By using the correct impregnation method as recommended by the supplier, the floor's grip can be maintained effectively, reducing the need for frequent sanding and thereby prolonging the floor's usability.

### Key Considerations for Squash Court Floor Sanding:

- Sanding should be along the length of the floorboards, using both belt and edge sanding machines for even results.
- Final sanding requires a 40-grit sandpaper, specific to squash floors, as opposed to the smoother 60-grit standard for other wooden sports floors.
- Post-sanding, the floor should receive deep impregnation and line marking paint. To prevent paint bleeding, either seal the tape edges with clear lacquer or use high-performance tape that prevents seepage.

Ensuring that the squash court floor undergoes the appropriate treatment after sanding is not just a matter of maintaining playing conditions; it's an investment in the longevity and safety of the sporting facility. By adhering to these maintenance standards, facility managers can ensure that their squash courts remain in top condition, providing a safe and enjoyable environment for players for years to come.

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