

Markus Gaebel · May 9

What Makes Squash Courts Different –Part 2: Outdoor and Demountable Courts

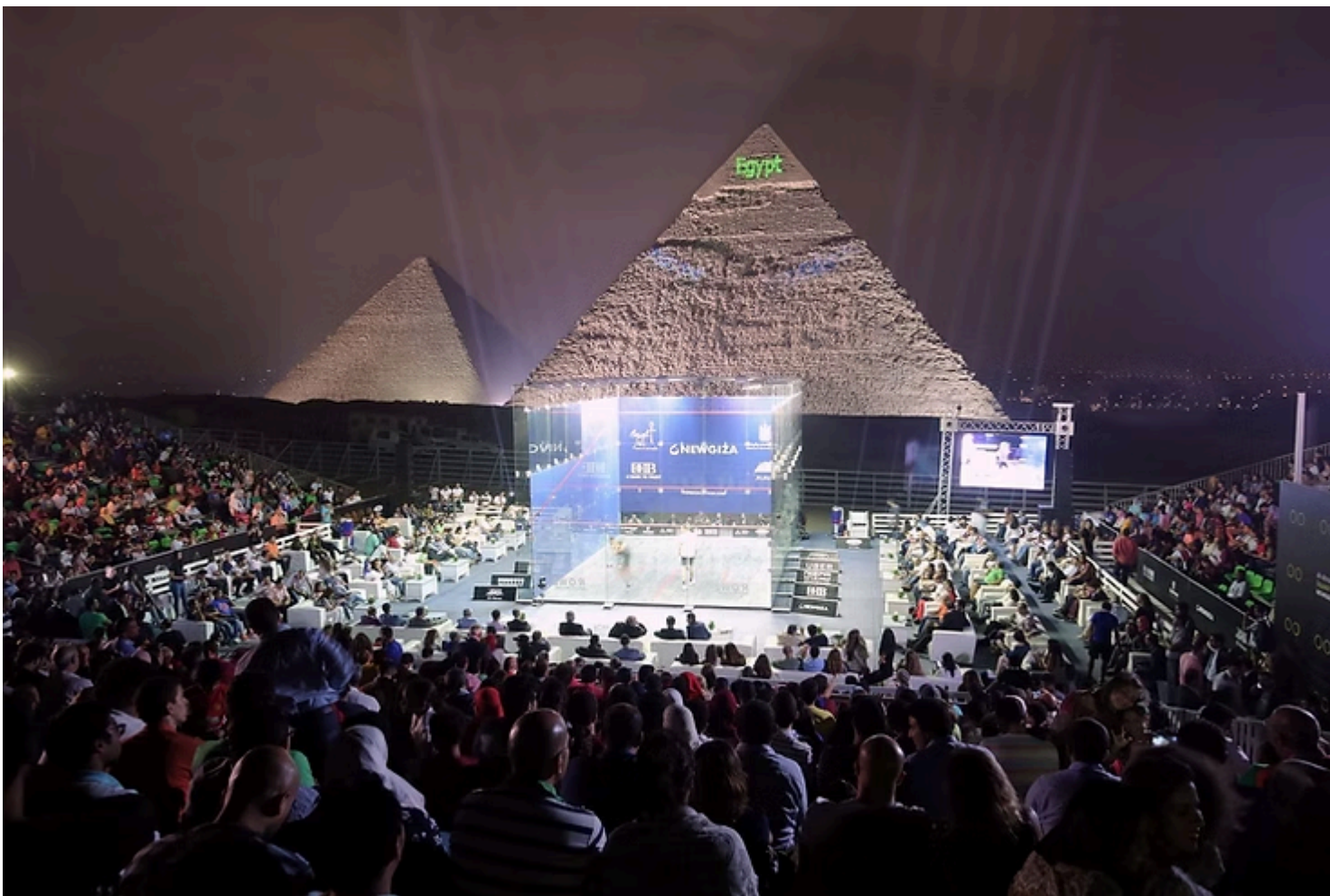


In our series *What Makes Courts Different*, we explore how various Squash court types influence the game and facility planning. Squash courts are not one-size-fits-all– even small design choices can impact gameplay, cost, and long-term durability. In Part 1, we introduced the different court types and why these differences matter.

Now, in Part 2, we focus exclusively on two special categories of courts that challenge the traditional indoor setup: **outdoor courts** and **demountable courts**. The goal is to understand how these unique solutions work, what challenges they bring, and how they can benefit players, clubs, and the future of the sport.

Outdoor Squash Courts: A Striking but Challenging Option

Some of the world’s most memorable Squash matches have been played on spectacular all-glass courts in stunning outdoor locations. From the base of the Great Pyramids of Giza to city-centre plazas and seaside piers, these demountable show courts deliver amazing visuals and global attention.



But while these events create the impression that Squash is played outdoors, the truth is that Squash is primarily an indoor sport. Taking the game outside brings significant technical, environmental, and practical challenges:

Weather and Flooring

A standard Squash court has a sprung hardwood floor that is designed for indoor use only. When placed outdoors, exposure to rain or humidity can quickly cause damage— swelling, warping, or dangerously slippery surfaces. Even direct sun can dry out and crack the floor. That is why demountable glass courts used in showcase events are installed only for a few days, often under covers or with the hope of dry conditions.

For permanent outdoor Squash courts, completely different flooring materials must be used— typically synthetic or treated composites— resulting in playing characteristics that differ from those players are used to indoors.

Wind and Structural Demands

Picture a Squash court as a tall, roofless box— roughly six metres high— made of four glass walls. When placed outdoors, this structure acts like a giant sail, highly vulnerable to wind pressure. Strong winds can exert tremendous force on the walls, which means a permanent outdoor glass court requires serious engineering— such as steel frames and reinforced supports— to ensure structural stability.

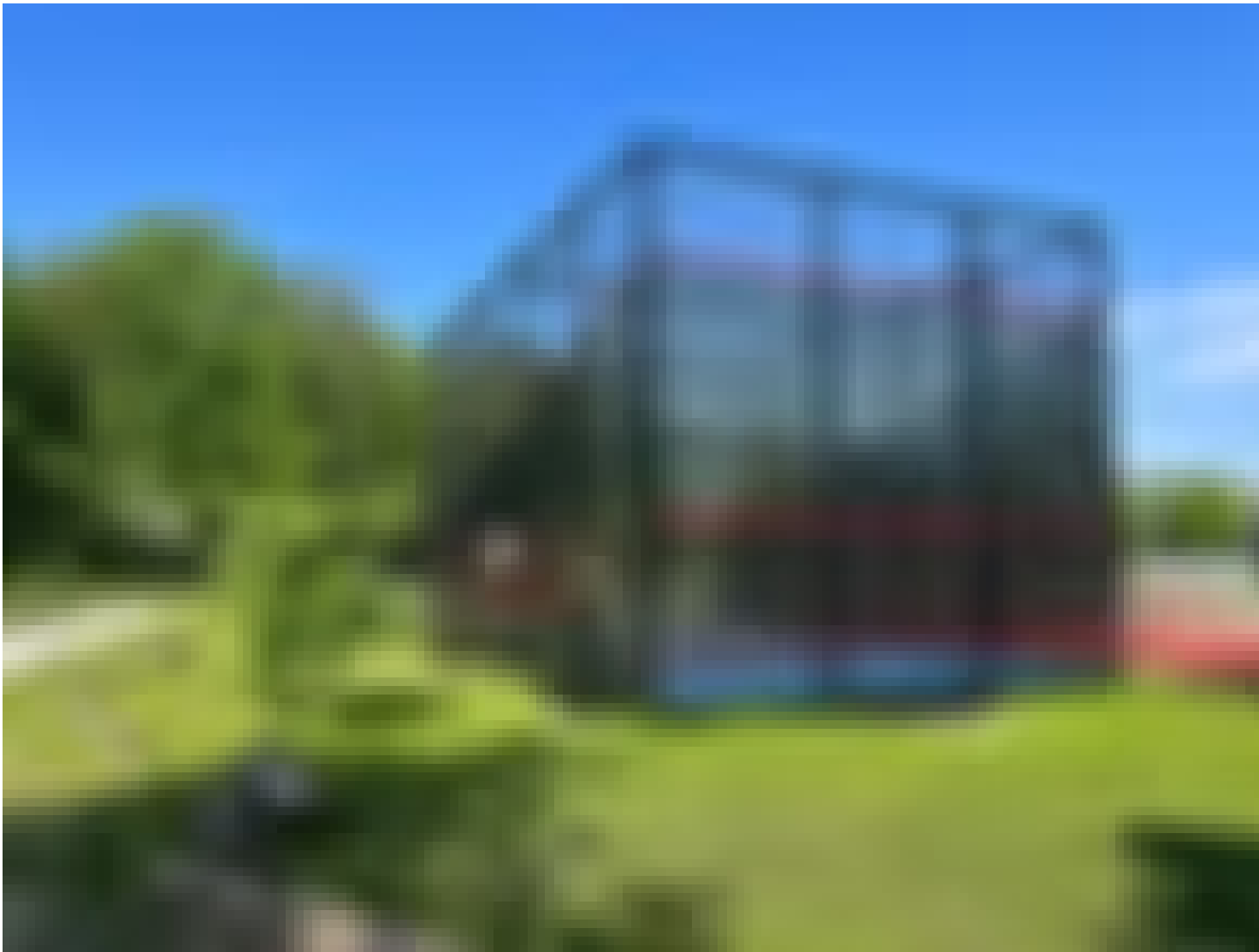
This wind-related challenge highlights a key difference between demountable glass show courts and permanently installed outdoor glass courts.

Heat, Glare, and Sand

Unlike indoor courts, outdoor Squash courts have no climate control. Under direct sunlight, a court can heat up quickly, turning into a greenhouse-like environment. Players may face discomfort, glare off the glass, and overheating.

To avoid this, matches on demountable show courts are often scheduled at night, under floodlights. Even then, environmental factors remain an issue. In many regions— such as the Middle East or India— wind can carry fine dust and sand directly into the open-topped court. A thin layer of sand on the floor creates a serious slipping hazard, especially during fast-paced play.

A Practical Outdoor Solution –The Access Courts Example



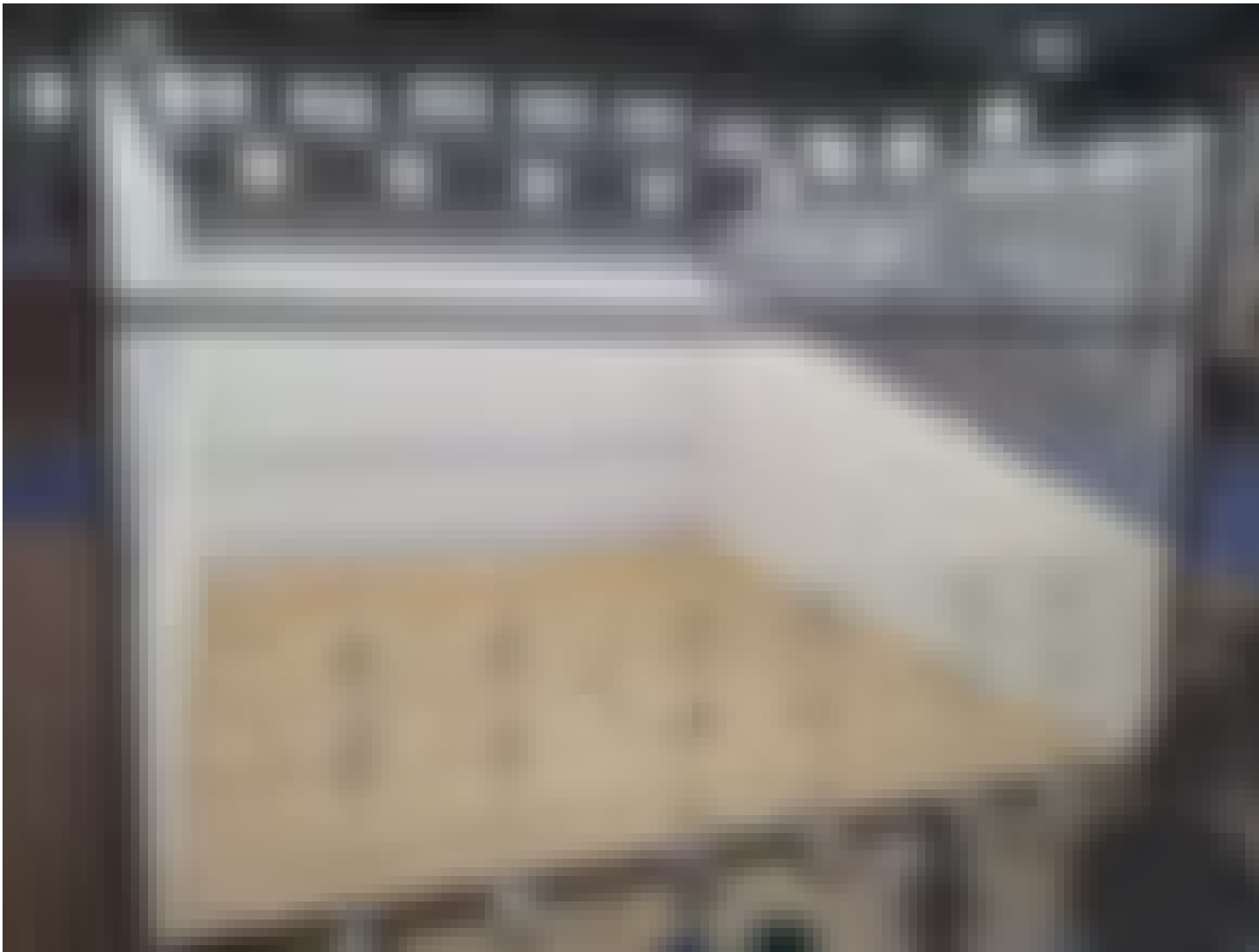
From the Squash Facilities Network’s current perspective, [Access Courts](#) is the only known provider offering a **permanent** outdoor Squash court that effectively addresses weather resistance, flooring durability, wind load, and structural integrity.

Their courts are engineered specifically for recreational outdoor use, featuring composite flooring, weather-protected glass walls, and a roof-level mesh to contain the ball. These technical adaptations provide a robust and enjoyable playing experience for casual and community-level use only, and not for professional events.

Demountable Courts: Flexibility to Relocate

When we talk about demountable Squash courts, many people picture the high-end all-glass show courts used at professional tournaments. Yes, those are demountable– they’re built to be taken apart and moved from venue to venue. However, *demountable* isn’t limited to fancy tournament courts. It also refers to more traditional-looking Squash courts that are designed so they can be disassembled and reassembled elsewhere. In simple terms, a demountable court is any court you can take down and set up again in a new location (with the right expertise) without destroying the materials in the process.

It is important to note that not every court can be moved. Whether a court is relocatable depends on how it was constructed and who the manufacturer is. Standard Squash courts– think of those with plaster walls– are essentially permanent. Once you build a conventional plaster-walled court, you cannot pick it up and move it; you would have to build a new one at the new site. The same goes for many panel courts that are bolted tightly to the building’s structure. Some companies, however, offer court systems specifically made to come apart. For example, Courtwall’s System 4.0 is a court construction that can be dismantled and relocated.



Courtwall System Court temporary built for the Samall Nations Games in Malta 2024

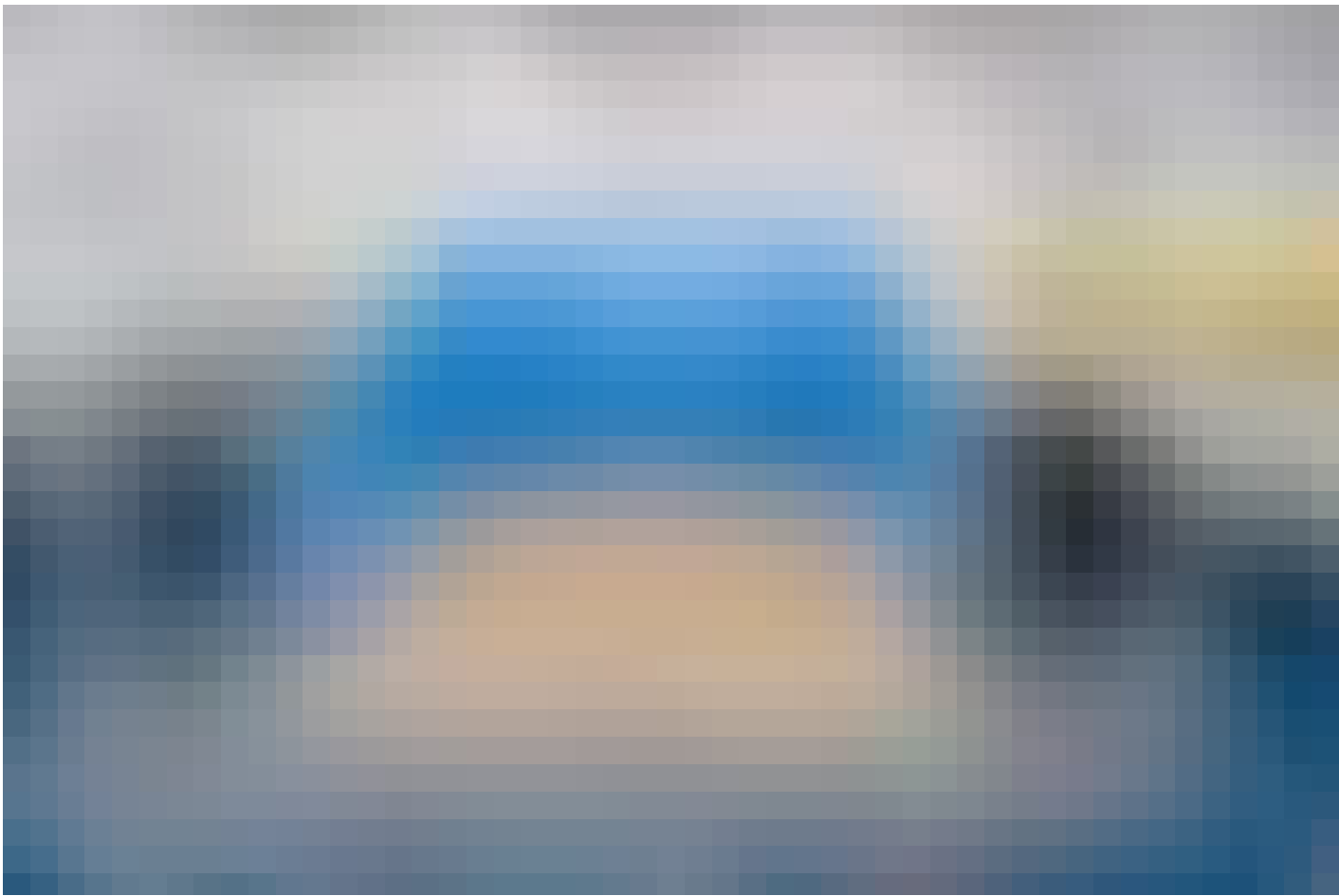
So, plan ahead if you might need to relocate your court in the future. If you are investing in a new Squash court for a club or facility and there is any chance you will move venues or repurpose the space, consider choosing a demountable design from the outset. You must decide this at the point of purchase.

Permanent vs Demountable Glass Courts: What's Different?

We have discussed that the all-glass show courts at events are demountable by nature. Now let us compare a permanently installed glass court (for example, a glass show court built into a facility) with a temporary demountable glass court used for events. They might look similar when you are watching a match, but their construction has some key differences:

- **Speed of assembly and take-down:** A demountable show court is engineered for quick setup and breakdown. Event organisers can assemble a demountable court in roughly two to three days and take it down in one to two days. In contrast, building a permanent all-glass court is a slower, one-time construction project that takes about one week. Speed is not a concern for a court that will live in one place, but it is critical for one that tours from venue to venue.
- **No permanent anchoring (steel substructure):** Demountable glass courts use a steel substructure or frame to support the walls. This free-standing frame holds everything steady **without** needing to anchor into a building's floor or walls– essential when, for example, the court is installed on a theatre stage where anchoring is impossible.
- **Integrated lighting system:** If you have ever seen an outdoor pro tournament, you might notice the lights are part of the court setup. Demountable courts usually come with their own ceiling-mounted lighting rig built into or attached to the court structure.

- **Glass panel design and replacement:** Demountable all-glass courts favour using panels of uniform size. This standardisation is deliberate – if a panel cracks during installation, it is easy to swap it with a spare of the same size.



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~~Fixed installed glass court with the glass walls up to the out of play lines~~

Permanent glass courts, however, can use custom-shaped panels to fit the court’s dimensions exactly up to the out-lines. If one of these custom-sized panels breaks, waiting two or three weeks for a replacement is acceptable during a new construction project. For a PSA event, a two-week delay just before the start is impossible – hence the need for standard-sized panels in portable courts.

One Clear Take-away

Glass courts are not the only ones you can move – many solid-wall systems are also built to be dismantled and rebuilt. If future flexibility matters, specify a **demountable** design right from the start, whatever court type you choose.

Next week, Part3 of this series will zoom in on each major court construction, break down the materials, weigh their pros and cons, and show how the demountable option stacks up for every one of them.