



THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY—KOEHLER FITNESS AND RECREATION COMPLEX

Date opened: **September 2010**
 Total square feet renovated: **28,000 square feet**
 Total cost of renovation: **\$1.5 million**
 Average number of daily users during the academic year: **550 - 600**
 Track: **Mondo Sportflex**
 Multipurpose courts: **Mondo Advance**
 Weight room: **Mondo Sport Impact and Inlaid Platforms**

Sport Architecture
 (USA)

THE UNIVERSITY OF FINDLAY IS A PRIVATE, COEDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN FINDLAY, OHIO, U.S. WITH MORE THAN 4,600 FULL- AND PART-TIME STUDENTS. ITS 101,000 SQUARE FOOT KOEHLER RECREATION COMPLEX WAS BUILT IN 1999. ONE SIDE OF THE BUILDING HOUSED AN ICE RINK AND A POPULAR CARDIO CENTER, AND THE OTHER SIDE CONTAINED THE UF VARSITY TEAMS' PRACTICE FACILITIES, INCLUDING FOUR BASKETBALL COURTS, A SIX-LANE INDOOR TRACK, SAND PITS FOR LONG JUMP, AND A WRESTLING ROOM.

AN EXCEPTIONAL GUIDE

In 2010, in response to a survey that revealed students wanted more recreation opportunities, University of Findlay converted the ice arena to a state-of-the-art student recreation and fitness center. According to **Bryan Golding**, UF's director of recreational services, university officials listened very closely to what students wanted, and they chose rubber flooring for the renovation that would meet the students' needs and be durable and easy to maintain.

SURVEYING THE STUDENTS

After University of Findlay discontinued its intercollegiate men's and women's hockey programs in the mid-2000s, the ice rink at the Koehler complex saw little use by students on campus. "We had a couple of intramural events on it, and some open skating for our students. It also was used by the community youth and adult hockey leagues, but the university was barely breaking even financially on the rink," Golding said. "Plus, there really was no open space that our students could come in and use at any time."

An in-depth survey of nearly 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students in November 2008 made the students' desires very clear: 76.4% said they never used the ice rink and 77.6% said they wanted a recreation center for the general student body that would not be reserved by varsity teams or outside groups.

High on the students' wish list for a new recreation center were a rock climbing wall (named by 65.9% of survey respondents); multipurpose courts for basketball, volleyball, tennis and badminton (60.7%); a juice bar (54.8%); a student lounge (51.3%); a dance/aerobic exercise room (43.7%); and racquetball courts (47.7%).



In addition, university officials realized that other nearby colleges and universities had student recreation centers, so renovating the facility would enable UF to better compete for prospective students.

Along with the existing cardio center, the final plans for the renovation included a multipurpose floor; a three-lane walking/jogging track; a weight room; a rock climbing wall; a racquetball court; a student lounge; a restaurant/snack bar; and an area with lounge chairs, billiards and pingpong tables.

TURNING AN ICE RINK INTO A RECREATION CENTER

University of Findlay hired RCM Architects to help turn the ice rink into a recreation center. Irvin Reinhart, project architect at RCM, said the assignment posed several challenges, including making the cold, uninviting space bright and exciting; fitting all of the required elements into the space; finding indoor flooring that would support all of the sporting and non-sporting events, such as banquets and concerts, without requiring protective floor mats; ensuring consistent flooring height throughout different sections of the facility; and completing construction within just five months.

But the biggest challenge was the ice rink itself, which sat on top of a 4-inch concrete slab. The architects were concerned that, because the concrete had been under ice for nearly 11 years, the slab and whatever was below it could be very wet, which could cause problems with the sports flooring that would be installed on top. So after the ice was removed, they drilled down about 5 feet through the concrete slab and took samples for moisture testing.

"We wanted to make sure that we didn't have a bad water condition under there," said Reinhart. "Otherwise, water vapor could continue to migrate through the slab and eventually break down the adhesion between the slab and the athletic flooring, which would create bubbles and gaps in the floor."

While they waited for the moisture test results, the construction team ground the slab in several places to make it flat. A slab that is not perfectly flat is not a concern for an ice arena, because water levels itself before it freezes, but it's especially important for a sports floor. Fortunately, only a few portions of the floor required significant grinding.

The test results showed that there was no significant water content under the slab, but after being underwater for years, the slab itself continued to have high levels of moisture. To keep construction on schedule, rather than waiting for the slab to dry, the architects decided to cover it with an epoxy vapor barrier that would seal the concrete and ensure water vapor could not rise up through the slab and affect the sports flooring.

DURABLE, EASY-TO-MAINTAIN FLOORING

Anticipating heavy use of the facility by students, faculty and staff, UF officials knew they had to select athletic flooring that was durable and easy to maintain, and that would best serve each specific activity.

"For the track, we wanted running track flooring that was durable and easy on the knees and shins. It had to have a little cushion in it," Golding said. "The same was true for the multipurpose flooring for the basketball/volleyball courts: It had to be something that was going to last and didn't feel like you were walking on concrete. For the weight room flooring, we needed a very good high-impact surface because we knew our varsity athletic teams would work out there, and when they train, the weight room floor absorbs a lot of impact from weights being dropped."

Kiefer Specialty Flooring, an authorized Mondo dealer and installer, worked with UF to identify sports flooring that would suit their purposes. Kiefer recommended Mondo's Sportflex rubber flooring for the track, Mondo's Advance rubber flooring for the multipurpose courts, and Mondo's Sport Impact and Inlaid Platforms for the weight room floors.

UF officials were already familiar with Mondo flooring: Two of the basketball courts and the track on the other side of the complex were Mondo rubber flooring. "It was a no-brainer to go with Mondo athletic flooring—their product is so good," said Golding. "We did bid out the flooring contract, but in the end, we wanted to go with the best, and they are the best."

Reinhart added, "We were very pleased when we found out that the Mondo rubber flooring would not need to be covered for large events or when food was being served."

COLOR-COORDINATED, LEVEL FLOORING

University of Findlay had a special challenge for Mondo related to its running track flooring: design a custom color to match the university's trademark orange—which Mondo was able to do—so that the running track lanes would alternate between black and orange, the school's official colors. Not only would this look impressive, but it would eliminate the need for lane stripes on the running track surface, which can wear away and require repainting.

RCM was pleased to be able to use different rubber flooring products for the track and for the main court areas because, in addition to their different colors, the sports flooring's varied textures would provide visual cues for the facility's users.

The architects were concerned, however, about installing athletic flooring with different thicknesses. Ensuring that rubber flooring thicknesses were uniform would prevent detailing problems and tripping hazards at the flooring transitions. "We were unable to find a manufacturer other than Mondo that offered all three of the athletic flooring types we selected and had them available in matching thicknesses," Reinhart said. "Without Mondo, we would have needed to work with multiple manufacturers whose sports floorings all had slightly different material thicknesses."



A RESOUNDING THUMBS UP!

The new facility opened its doors on Sept. 15, 2010. Golding said students have been extremely happy with it and venue use has skyrocketed. Within a year after it opened, 115,000 students, faculty and staff had used the center.

Golding also said UF is extremely pleased with the new Mondo rubber flooring. "We love it. It has been great. From students using it and playing on it to maintenance and cleaning, it has held up very well," he said. "I just don't see scuff and other marks appear like I have seen on wood courts. In addition, unlike with wood courts, we don't need to re-varnish or re-seal them every couple of years, which helps keep the maintenance costs low."

AN AWARD-WINNING FACILITY

The new facility already has garnered industry honors: In December 2011, the **American Sports Builders Association** recognized the **Koehler center** for excellence in sports facility construction with an award for outstanding venue in the indoor multi-purpose facility division.





