Basketball Courts for the Ballarat Population Boom

In the mid-1800s, a gold rush brought scores of new inhabitants to the Australian city of Ballarat, doubling its population over the course of a decade.

Then, the gold rush ended, and the population began to dwindle. Yet, Ballarat remained even as other gold mining towns disappeared. The community stayed connected to its rich history, naming its men's and women's NBL basketball teams the Miners and the Rush, respectively.

A century after the gold rush, Ballarat is suddenly booming again as mining has resumed. Population growth could double from current numbers by 2050, and some are concerned that growing too quickly could have negative livability consequences for residents.

Making Ballarat Livable and Playable

One thing every vibrant community needs is a place for sports and recreation, and the Ballarat community was outgrowing its existing indoor facilities.

Basketball Ballarat announced it would have 500 teams competing in the 2019 season, including more than 340 youth teams—an all-time high. Increased participation sparked demand for court space, which was getting hard to come by. The association resorted to scheduling many games at local schools.

Ballarat needed an updated sports facility to support its athletes and host large crowds. Leading the charge to obtain government funding and turn the project into a reality was Basketball Ballarat CEO Peter Eddy.

Eddy spent years petitioning all levels of government to provide funding for the a $24-million Ballarat Sports Centre extension. During that time, plans for the project grew along with anticipation. What was going to be a three-court sports stadium doubled to six full-sized basketball courts with seating for 3,000 spectators around a showcourt for high-profile events.

Eddy and the team at Basketball Ballarat needed to find a sports floor that would work with their budget and provide the performance attributes that elite athletes expect in a world-class sports complex.
PROJECT PROFILE: Ballarat Sports Centre

Finding Partners Worth Their Weight in Gold

Basketball Ballarat found the perfect partners in Action Floor Systems® and the experienced sports flooring experts from Ace Floors and Coatings.

After a long process of evaluation and discussion, Eddy decided the FIBA-certified Action ProAir WBS fit the bill. This floating floor system features wide body sleepers and an Action E-Cush Pad for exceptional ball response and playability.

“The benefit of wide body sleepers is that their width means they are closer together,” explains Action Floors sales rep Norm Goedheer. “That narrows the gaps between sleepers and helps provide uniform performance and better ball return.”

Jason Tully and the team from Ace Floors and Coatings won the bid to install the sports floor system thanks to the dealer’s experience on similar projects, such as basketball courts at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS). Plus, the sports flooring contractor could also provide and install retractable stadium seating through its sister company, Ace Seating Systems.

Looking Towards a Bright Future

The Ballarat Sports Centre officially opened on August 4, 2019. Tully and his team, as well as Eddy and everyone at Basketball Ballarat, are celebrating a mission accomplished.

“Everyone involved has been a little overwhelmed by the quality of the design and construction of the new facility,” Eddy says. “It has exceeded all expectations, and the flooring and retractable seating systems provide the flexibility and quality finish we needed to meet everyday use and to attract major national level events.”

During Eddy’s recent induction into the Ballarat Sports Hall of Fame, he said working on the new sports centre was an experience he will remember fondly. It will also be part of his lasting legacy. Because, while Ballarat may face more growing pains, one thing is certain ... people will have a place to play and watch basketball.

If you would like to discuss specialized sports flooring solutions contact us online or call 800-746-3512

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