



Guide To Sports Ground Fencing

A Specifier's Guide
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Fencing

First Choice Solutions for Architects, Specifiers & Contractors



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Sports ground fencing enables participants to enjoy sports without presenting a nuisance or hazard to neighbours. High-quality fencing also helps to project the right image to club members, opposing teams and the local community.

What many people do not realise is that there are numerous types of fencing available, as well as options to suit the sports being played and other local factors. Each application has its own unique set of requirements, so the optimum sports ground fencing can vary from one facility to the next, and even between different areas at the same site.

This specifier's guide to sports ground fencing explains the fencing types and options available, and steers the reader towards developing a specification that will fulfil the performance requirements while taking into account costs, aesthetics and other factors.

Sports ground fencing achieves the following...

- Prevents balls straying, so maintains the flow of the game and prevents activities from becoming a nuisance for neighbours or a hazard to road users
- Prevents all but determined intruders from gaining access for unauthorised use of sports grounds
- Prevents access by animals such as dogs, foxes and rabbits that can damage and foul sports grounds
- Enhances the appearance of sports facilities
- Boundary demarcation

Aims and objectives

Before selecting a type of fencing it is important to consider what the requirements are. In some cases the primary consideration will be to prevent balls from straying from the pitch or court. This is the most common reason for installing fencing at grounds that host football, hockey, tennis and basketball.

However, if there is a road adjacent to the sports ground then there is a risk that a stray ball could cause a traffic accident resulting in damage, injury or even death. Clearly the measures required in this situation are likely to be different from those where the only consequences are a break in play or a complaint from a neighbour.

Fouling and digging by dogs, foxes and rabbits can be a persistent problem at some sports grounds. Most fences extend down to the level of the playing surface or typically 25mm above it but, where burrowing animals are a problem, the fencing can be buried and set in a concrete cill



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to provide better protection. Although this is more expensive, it may only be necessary for a relatively small proportion of the overall length of fencing.

Sports grounds represent a high investment in facilities and they require ongoing maintenance. To help minimise the cost of maintenance the normal practice is to restrict access to authorised users only. Out of hours it is therefore necessary to prevent access; fencing – together with suitably specified gates – can prevent or deter all but determined intruders.

Depending on the sports ground ownership, layout and location, it may be that the requirement is for simple boundary demarcation. This does not require high fencing, so in these circumstances it might be preferable to install lower-cost railings or low-level mesh panel fencing.

Whatever type of fencing is used, it is important that a clear view is maintained through the fence for spectators, supervisors, parents, teachers and others.

Choosing the right type of sports ground fencing

Sometimes an area will be dedicated to one sport only, but today it is more likely that the facility is designed as a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) with, for example, tennis, hockey, soccer, basketball and netball played.

Sports ground fences are supported by steel posts, with a lower rebound section up to 1.2m high and the remainder of the fence being of a different specification. For example, if welded wire mesh (weldmesh) is used, the rebound section will often use a 50x50mm mesh made from 8 and 6mm wires, while the upper part of the panel will have 200x50mm apertures formed from 8 and 6mm wires. Rebound fencing is preferable to rebound boards because it provides better visibility for viewing and security purposes. Sports ground fence heights range from 2.4 to 5m overall.

Posts and panels are galvanised to protect against corrosion and have a tough, low-maintenance polyester powder coat applied to provide an attractive aesthetic finish. This coating is available in a choice of standard colours, or custom colours can be applied to special order. Depending on the sports being played, it may also be appropriate to install perimeter kickboards at the bottom of the fence. If football is to be played, goal recesses can be incorporated within the fence.

Two types of fencing are used for sports grounds, namely welded wire mesh and chainlink. Welded wire mesh normally lasts longer, is more robust and presents a higher-quality appearance - though it is slightly more expensive. Rolled mesh systems, such as chainlink, are likely to need periodic retensioning and repairs, so the total cost of ownership would be greater.

If the sports ground is adjacent to a road, then it might be appropriate to increase the height of the fence, add netting above the fence panels, or create a net-covered roof to enclose the playing area.



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To avoid the risk of players being injured by running into posts, these should be positioned on the outside of the fence, with low-profile clamping bars and fasteners on the inside so that this surface is as close as possible to being flush. Secure clamping, in combination with welded mesh in which every wire junction is welded, helps to minimise the noise generated when the fence is struck by a ball or player.

It is recommended that specifiers should consider incorporating a 'bolt hole gate' within MUGA fences so that anyone backed into a corner in a bullying situation can escape. Typically a bolt hole gate will be the height of the rebound fence, with a spring latch release lock that can be operated from the inside only, and a self-closing mechanism.

Sometimes new or replacement sports ground fencing is covered by Permitted Development Rights and does not need planning permission, but it depends on the nature and scale of the works, as well as the location. However, whatever sports ground fencing is being considered, it is recommended that the local planning authorities are consulted. Sport England, in partnership with the Department of Communities and Local Government, has produced a helpful handbook, *Making a planning application - A practical guide for sports clubs* - see Useful Resources below.

Gates

As with the fencing, sports ground gates are designed with external frameworks and hinges, and low-profile clamping bars and fasteners to reduce the risk of injury to players who come into contact with the gate during play. In addition, gaps between the gate and the surrounding framework are kept to a minimum. Gates should open outwards.



The importance of correct installation

Any fence is only as good as its installation. Poorly installed fencing will be less robust and more likely to need repairs and maintenance earlier than would otherwise be necessary. In the worst case, poorly installed fencing could cause injury to players who come into contact with, for example, fasteners that have been installed incorrectly.

Installing fencing is a skilled job and specifiers should be aware that some fencing contractors hire unskilled labour on a project-by-project basis, rather than retaining teams of properly trained installers.

Specifiers are strongly recommended to use fencing contractors that are accredited to ISO 9001:2000. Other accreditations to look for are CHAS (Contractors Health & Safety Scheme), membership of the Construction Line database, and registration with the Safe Contractor scheme.

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Maintenance considerations

It is important to minimise the costs associated with ongoing maintenance of sports facilities. Correctly specified fencing will require little or no ongoing maintenance. However, it is advisable to avoid rolled chainlink fencing, as this is likely to need periodic retensioning and repairs.

Specifying low-maintenance or pre-treated timber for perimeter kickboards can also minimise the amount of maintenance required.

Standards And Specifications

There are several British and European standards that may be applicable to sports ground fencing. The following table lists those most commonly encountered.

BS 1722-1:2006	Fences. Specification for chain link fences
BS 1722-2:2006	Fences. Specification for strained wire and wire mesh netting fences
BS 1722-14:2006	Fences. Specification for open mesh steel panel fences
BS 1722-16:2009	Fences. Specification for powder coatings to be used as a plastics finish to components and mesh
BS 4102:1998	Specification for steel wire for general fencing purposes
BS EN 10223-4:1998	Steel wire and wire products for fences. Steel wire welded mesh fencing
BS EN 10223-5:1998	Steel wire and wire products for fences. Steel wire woven hinged joint and knotted mesh fencing
BS EN 10223-6:1998	Steel wire and wire products for fences. Steel wire chain link fencing
BS EN 10223-7:2002	Steel wire and wire products for fences. Steel wire welded panels. For fencing
BS EN ISO 1461:2009	Hot dip galvanized coatings on fabricated iron and steel articles. Specifications and test methods

If In Doubt, Ask

Procter Fencing Systems is the one of the UK's leading specialist manufacturers and installers of fencing and gates. From its sites in Leeds, South Wales and Brentwood, Procter Fencing Systems offers a comprehensive service to survey, design, manufacture and install fencing and gates nationwide. All products are designed in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001 and all meet the appropriate health, safety and product standards. Installation is carried out by the company's own teams of skilled installers.

Useful Resources

White Paper: Planning a Fencing Project

Hints and tips for people new to planning fencing projects and those who are experienced but who want to minimise costs.

Email: enquiries@procterfencing.co.uk

Download: www.fencing-systems.co.uk/specifiers-guides/view-category/

Fencing Selector

A risk-based utility to aid in identifying the best type of fencing to protect against given threats.

Email: enquiries@procterfencing.co.uk

Download: www.fencing-systems.co.uk/specifiers-guides/view-category/

Making a planning application – A practical guide for sports clubs

This handbook has been produced by Sport England in partnership with the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Download:

http://www.sportengland.org/facilities__planning/making_a_planning_application.aspx



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Further Information

Procter Fencing Systems

A family-owned business with more than 100 years' experience in designing, manufacturing and installing high-quality fencing and gates throughout the UK.

Website: www.fencing-systems.co.uk

Northern England: Isabella Road, Garforth, Leeds LS25 2DY

Tel: 0113 287 6282 — Fax: 0113 287 6284 — Email: enquiries@procterfencing.co.uk

Wales and the South-West: 11 Pantglas Industrial Estate, Bedwas, Caerphilly, CF83 8XD

Tel: 029 2088 2111 — Fax: 029 2088 8544 — Email: enquiries@procterfencing.co.uk

South-East England: Codham Hall, Great Warley, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3JT

Tel: 0800 294 4177 — Fax: 029 2088 8544 — Email: enquiries@procterfencing.co.uk

BSI (British Standards Institution)

British, European and International Standards, and Publicly Available Specifications.

Tel: 020 8996 9001 — Fax: 020 8996 7001

Website: www.bsigroup.com — Email: cservices@bsigroup.com

Sport England

Advice, guidance and funding for sport.

Tel: 08458 508508 — Fax: 020 7383 5740

Website: www.sportengland.org — Email: info@sportengland.org

The information contained in this publication is intended as a guide only and is believed to be correct at the time of going to press. However, it is the reader's responsibility to ensure that all current legislation is complied with when specifying or installing sports ground fencing.

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Procter Fencing Systems, Pantglas Ind Est. Bedwas, Caerphilly. CF83 8XD

Tel: 029 2088 2111 — Fax: 029 2088 8544 — Email: enquiries@procterfencing.co.uk

