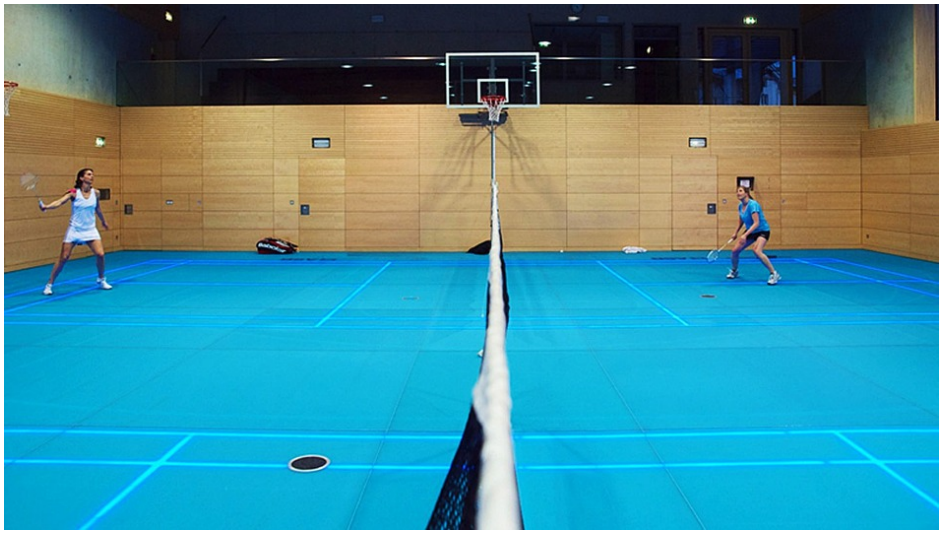
Check Out the Sports Floor From the Future

Mashable



Imagine a runner on a track with a glowing marker that follows her, showing speed and time. Or a tennis court that shows for sure whether the ball was out, or even a basketball court floor that runs ads during half time.

Those are some of the possibilities with a glass floor designed by German company ASB Systembau GMBH. ASB supplies glass squash courts, and now has moved into smart flooring.

The company developed the *Tron*-like floor above after it noted that the glass on the squash courts, which is translucent rather than transparent, could be combined with lighting to make moveable lines that would be invisible when unlit. That led to the ASB Glassfloor [1], which has already been installed in a German school's athletics complex.

The floor itself is an aluminum frame that supports the glass, which is tempered to resist breakage, which means the panels can be much larger and thinner for their size than traditional glass floor tiles, like the ones made famous by *Saturday Night Fever*.

The surface is etched to prevent stray reflection, so players won't get blinded. In addition, to get that particular friction — the "feel" of a traditional parquet floor — the glass is covered with tiny ceramic dots.

Instead of painting lines on a wooden surface, the floor uses a layer of LEDs underneath the glass. The LEDs can be in the form of boundary lines for different sports, or can serve as a display. This system eliminates the problem of painting multiple lines on the floor for different sports. The glass floor is also, ASB says, more durable than wood.

But forget just being able to adjust a floor for current sports: The ability to put lines on the floor means you can design games that use them as barriers or guides. A "smart" ball could sound off when a barrier is hit, for instance. Or lights could track players and show if they are off-sides or out of bounds. The future of sporting events just got a little more exciting.

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[1] http://asbglassfloor.com/sports_flooring.php