PVC in Sport
PVC COMES OF AGE

Having conducted a thorough investigation of its environmental sustainability credentials, the decision by the organisers of premier global sporting events to make extensive use of PVC confirms the valuable contribution that this amazing material is making to modern sport.

Not counting behind-the-scenes applications like pipes and electrical cable insulation, the venues being constructed and fitted out for new sporting events in London this year alone will exceed 140,000 square metres of PVC for flooring, roofing and exterior screening.

Athletes will be wearing clothes and shoes made from PVC; many sports will rely exclusively on PVC equipment and protection; basketball, badminton and table tennis will be among the sports playing on high performance PVC floors; athletes will be carrying their kit and equipment in PVC sports bags; and spectators will sit under PVC canopies, protected by PVC barriers.

PVC IS AN AMAZING MATERIAL

Over the past 60 years PVC has grown to be one of the most commonly used man-made polymers because of the unrivalled combination of properties that it offers. Its ratio of economic cost to performance makes it immediately more accessible than most other materials and the diversity of ways in which it can be used challenges the imagination, from roofing membranes to credit cards, from children’s toys to pipes for water.

Few other materials are as versatile or able to fulfil such demanding performance specifications and, alongside building & construction and the health sector, sport has been one of the areas that has taken full advantage of the possibilities it offers.

PVC products are very durable (with many products lasting over 60 years) and its tough reliability means that it requires minimum maintenance. Unlike other plastics, PVC is inherently flame resistant and aesthetically it opens up functional and design opportunities that are both visually striking and fundamentally practical.

After a long potential first life, PVC’s unique physical properties allow it to be easily recycled (over 50,000 tonnes of PVC are already recycled in the UK each year through the industry sponsored RecoVinyl programme) and this contributes to its favourably small environmental footprint.

Seeking long-term sustainability

In 2011, following the conclusion of the 10-year ‘Vinyl 2010’ product stewardship voluntary commitment (recognised by the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development), the European PVC industry embarked on a pioneering new full life-cycle sustainable development programme based on the principles of The Natural Step. VinylPlus was launched on 22 June 2011 www.vinylplus.eu
The 2012 Olympic Stadium features a tensile membrane PVC roof.

*Picture source: LOCOG*

“There are cases where for Health and Safety reasons the only solution is a PVC based material.”

[www.london2012.com/learninglegacy](http://www.london2012.com/learninglegacy)
Affordable, long-lasting, easy to maintain PVC is a highly versatile construction material with a favourable environmental footprint. It is used extensively in the stylish seating, roofs, floors we see, as well as the behind-the-scenes piping and electrical wiring that we don’t.
1. Gottlieb Daimler Stadion roof, Stuttgart. **Picture:** Kind permission of ECVM.  
2. Lords Cricket Ground roof. **Picture:** Kind permission of Base Structures Ltd.  
3. Volksparkstadion roof, Hamburg. **Picture:** Kind permission of ECVM.  
4. Cape Town World Cup 2010 Stadium. Picture: Kind permission of Bruce Sutherland, City of Capetown/PVCplus. **Background.** Stadium seating. **Picture:** Fotalia.
SAFETY FIRST

From rescue buoys, landing mats and safety screens to padded protectors; PVC makes sport safer for participants and spectators alike. Tough resilience combines with flexibility to provide comfort that is capable of taking the hardest knocks day after day.
Playing and learning are one and the same to children. Ultra-safe PVC equipment provides youngsters with the protective environments and safety to begin to test their skills and learn to stretch the boundaries.
Whether inside or outside, the quality of an activity surface is critical to performance and safety. Whether a polished gymnasium floor, an exercise mat, a ping-pong table or the floor of a slip resistant shower cubicle; PVC offers the same tough, low maintenance longevity and affordability.
Pouring rain, raging seas and blazing sunshine present no problem to PVC. From protective clothing to retractable stadium roofs and fully climate-controlled indoor environments, PVC makes it possible to enjoy sport whatever the conditions.

Background. Miejski Stadium in Poland Picture: Marek Kaczmarczyk, Mehler Texnologies
As competitors stretch to achieve ever higher peaks of performance, sports equipment is able to keep pace by substituting traditional materials with the higher performance characteristics of man-made polymers like PVC.
1. High jump landing pad. **Picture:** Kind permission of BPF.
2. All weather sailing protection. **Picture:** iStock.
3. Inflatable white-water kayak. **Picture:** iStock.
4. Boxing gloves. **Picture:** Fotalia.
5. Hockey protective pads and goal backboard. **Picture:** iStock.
6. Protective clothing and downhill slalom poles. **Picture:** iStock.

**Background.** Soccer training cones. **Picture:** iStock.
Adding to our perennial leisure favourites, each year sees the arrival of exhilarating new physical activities, many only made possible through the unique performance characteristics of materials like PVC.
1. Zorbing. **Picture:** Kind permission of ECVM.
2. Airboarding. **Picture:** By Bernard van dierendonck. Kind permission of Fun-Care AG.
3. Dog agility tunnel. **Picture:** Fotalia.
4. Snorkelling on the beach. **Picture:** Fotalia.

**Background.** Inflatable sledding tubes. **Picture:** iStock.
Stylish trainers, fitness equipment, sports bags, vehicle branding and the weatherproof temporary event banners that can be recycled into trendy new products. PVC adds colour to sport worldwide.
1. Sports kit bag. **Picture:** iStock.
2. Running shoes. **Picture:** Kind permission of BPF.
3. Stylish bags recycled from Turin Winter Olympic 2006 banners. **Picture:** Kind permission of ECVM.
4. Sponsor decals. **Picture:** Kind permission of DJK Signs.
5. Aerobic kettle bells. **Picture:** iStock.
6. Golf bag. **Picture:** iStock. **Background.** Vinyl banners at the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics. **Picture:** Kind permission of ECVM.