

CASE STUDY

GYMNASIUM EQUIPMENT

PORTABLE VS. CEILING-SUSPENDED BACKSTOPS: THE PROS, CONS AND BUFFALOES' DECISION

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Exterior view of the Coors Events Center, home of the University of Colorado Buffaloes. Photo courtesy University of Colorado. Inside the renovated facility, Draper's EZ-Fold TB-25B rear folding backstops are ready for action!

- Renovation to arena initiates decision to refurbish and bring to life 31 year old basketball goals.

The University of Colorado's 11,000 seat Coors Events Center is home to the Buffaloes' basketball and volleyball teams. When the facility opened in 1979, it featured 47' tall EZ-Fold basketball backstops on the competition court. About 15 years after moving into the building, someone decided they should be using portable backstops. So, they folded their EZ-Fold model TB-25B Rear-Braced, Rear-Folding backstops to the ceiling and forgot about them. Until the summer of 2010.

In 2010, the Coors Events Center underwent a renovation and addition that included some work in the main arena area. At that time, the university installed a new, state-of-the-art floor to protect their athletes and allow them to perform at their best. After the new floor was installed, the school quickly learned that their portable backstops were causing damage, so they explored the idea of using the EZ-Fold backstops that they had long ago folded to the ceiling and forgotten about. This is where Draper and our local representative got involved.

The Draper team found that while the 31-year-old backstops were in need of a couple of repairs, they were still in pretty good shape. We made a few adjustments, added new winches, safety straps and rear, jackknife-style folding braces, and the backstops were fully functional and ready for NCAA Division I competition. Surprised at their durability and pleased with the relative ease of resurrecting the existing backstops, the school decided to add four new backstops on the side courts.

The University of Colorado quickly learned that portable backstops can have negative effects on some new, high-tech flooring systems, but ceiling-suspended backstops offer lots of other advantages and benefits when compared to portable backstops. The following are some of those advantages:

STORAGE SPACE – Portable backstops require large amounts of storage space when not in use. Anyone who has wandered around an arena during a game or event has likely encountered a hallway that is nearly impassable because it is blocked with portables that are not in use.

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Draper offers several options for folding ceiling suspended basketball backstops up and out of the way when not in use. Portable backstops do have their place, and Draper provides several models, but don't forget the drawbacks.

To store portable backstops, you need the equivalent of a one-car garage for each pair, while ceiling suspended backstops fold up to the ceiling where they are out of mind and out of the way. Certainly, the University of Colorado wouldn't let the old portable monsters sit around unused, while taking up valuable space, for 15 years like they did the ceiling suspended backstops.

STABILITY

Under the right installation conditions and with the proper backstop design, ceiling-suspended backstops are very stable. Portable backstops require that the dunking loads are cantilevered at least 8' in front of the support structure, which can result in a significant amount of backboard and goal movement. Ceiling suspended backstops are designed with a direct support structure directly behind the backboard and goal to maximize strength and rigidity.

FLOOR AND SEATING SPACE

Portable backstops take considerable amounts of floor space during use. Portable backstops have weighted bases that are 6' to 7' deep and 3½' to 4' wide. The base sits 4' to 6' beyond the court end line. The large base required to keep portables from tipping can encroach on space needed for baseline seats. Facilities like Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium could lose three or four rows of seating if they decided to change to portable backstops. Portable backstops can also limit court size or simply cannot be used because of insufficient space. According to Coors Event Center's director, Steven Wells, the University of Colorado was able to increase

the length of their practice courts by several feet with ceiling suspended backstops, which allows for more realistic practices.

SET UP AND MAINTENANCE TIME

To get ready for games or practice, portable backstops must be rolled to the gymnasium, properly located, anchored, raised, and adjusted to the correct height every time they are used. According to Wells, it used to require 4 to 6 people to switch from game to practice set up which was often done at odd hours and at overtime pay rates. With ceiling suspended backstops, the winch does all the work to accurately lower the goal into the right position, every time, and with considerably less manpower.

Portable backstops have their place and work where other backstop styles cannot, but they also have drawbacks. Don't assume, just because a space is called an arena, that it is mandatory to use portable backstops. Contact Draper or your local Draper Gymnasium Equipment Dealer for assistance in planning your equipment needs to ensure you are choosing backstops that best fit your application.

For more information on Draper's complete line of basketball backstops, visit draperinc.com/go/BBallBackstops.htm.

To learn more about the University of Colorado, visit cu.edu.

draperinc.com/whitepapers_casestudies.aspx