



The Use of Smart MUGAS (Smoogas) in schools.

Why Do We Need a Smooga?

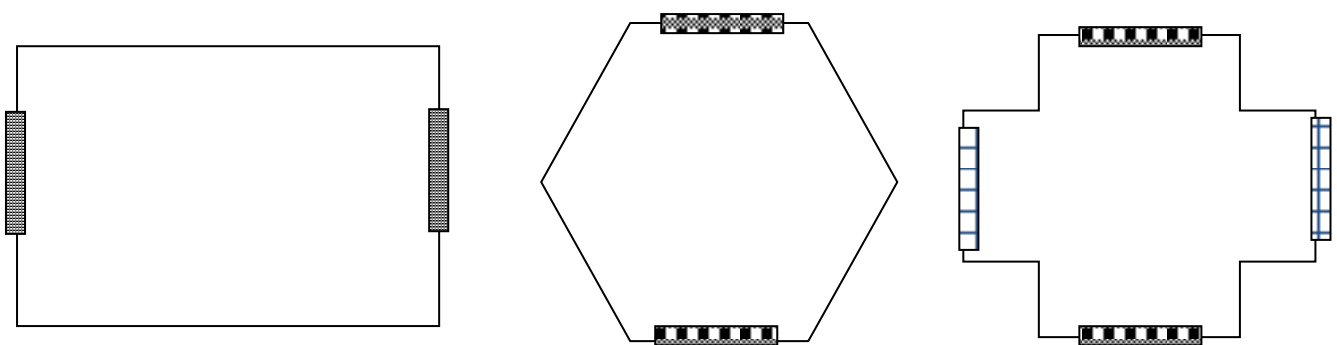
Avoid conflict in your play spaces. Demand on play space within schools has been acute for some years and there will inevitably be conflicts of use and space in the playground. Being able to corral certain activities, keeping children safe from each others' play has been identified by teachers to be a very real issue and proved to be an important area of consideration for Carolyn, Smooga director, in her role as a landscape architect and designer of play areas.

What or Who is Smooga? Smooga are a Family business, established in 2012 by husband and wife team, Keith and Carolyn, after a flash of inspiration and about 12 months work. Their aim is to provide Smart MUGAs promoting fun, games and sport for young people in schools (particularly Primaries) in the UK.

What's a MUGA? It's a Multi Use Games Area.

What's so smart about this one? You can move it around and tailor it to your needs, where and when you need it. As it's a modular design, it can be as big or small as you wish, it's your choice. Then you can change your mind and move it again. Why the phonetic complication? Smooga sounds nice, Smugger does not (to our ears anyway), therefore to remove the complication we made it phonetically easy.

How Can we use it? Your Smooga will create a fun and secure environment for team games such as football, hockey or handball. We show below some fun ways to change the playing arena to make well known team games different, engaging and fun. Try putting the goals at different points within the shape or more than two goals on a pitch, and so on.



Where did the Idea come from? The initial premise has come from a recognised need to provide safe areas for play and sport within schools in particular.

The ethos behind it is to make play and sport easier, more accessible and inclusive.

It started in 2012. Firstly, The success of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics on UK soil led to a groundswell of interest in sport and people started talking about 'Olympic legacy'. At the same time, there was growing



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concern that school sports was suffering due to Government spending cuts. The Guardian ran a feature way back on 7th February 2012 asking 'is school sport in crisis?' There have been several well covered stories in the media regarding the selling of school playing fields. On the 22nd August 2012 Radio 4 covered the story of a SW London school being forced to sell off playing fields to developers to fund a £30m refurbishment project. Also fuelling the debate are the new rules on playing space; whereas schools previously had to provide pitches ranging from 5,000sqm to 54,000sqm depending on pupil numbers, they now only have to provide "suitable outdoor space".

Whatever the political and socio-economic landscape, sports and play areas come under severe pressure and we need to find simple, effective and inexpensive ways to optimise the use of the space we have available for recreation, sport and play.

What Smooga can do is offer a solution to schools that encourages more young people, some of the time, to participate in games and activity *whenever* they are in the playground. The key benefit to using the 'Smooga', is that it helps to resolve spatial conflict in primary schools (and potentially secondaries) across the UK. As we have said, demand on play space within schools has never been so acute and there will inevitably be conflicts of use and space.

Positive early experiences of any kind of sport can have a lasting impact on a young person and can provide the foundation for a lifetime's involvement in sporting activity of many kinds. Sport, when introduced into a young persons' life, can have enormous benefits for personal development, social skills and levels of confidence, not to mention the obvious health benefits of an active lifestyle - excellent habits to embed at an early age. Statistics show that 1 in 5 children leave primary school obese. (The Guardian, 7th Feb 2012). The need to provide areas for play, sport and learning are clearly apparent, and this has received an even greater degree of focus following the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We at Smooga are delighted and excited to still be involved in encouraging the mix of play and sport in education. We are sure that schools will find uses for their Smooga as yet undreamed of by the Smooga team and we would hope these are shared with the wider education community in the fullness of time.