



DUNLOP TUG OF WAR MATTING

GETTING TO GRIPS - INDOOR MATTING

For those members who may not yet be aware, the only matting recommended by TWIF for indoor competition use is Dunlomat, which is exclusively manufactured in The Netherlands by Dunlop Conveyor Belting. This relationship stretches back many years. Dunlomat continues to be used in numerous national and international championship competitions around the world. However, it has been quite a while since we last featured this subject so we asked our long-standing contact at Dunlop, Les Williams, to bring us up to date on the potentially slippery world of rubber matting.

TWO CATEGORIES OF RUBBER MATTING

There are more manufacturers and traders of rubber matting than ever before on the international market. The vast majority of rubber matting is produced in South East Asia, predominately China. There are two broad categories of matting – general purpose and specialist applications. This is important to know because more than 95% of matting found on the open market is mass produced general purpose, low grade matting that contains the lowest grade, unregulated raw materials.

As far as the rubber industry is concerned, from a technical point of view, rubber matting is at the bottom of the pile. In the eyes of most, all that it is required to do is lay on the ground. It is therefore regarded purely as a commodity, hence the extremely low selling prices. Sadly, the temptation of these low prices has caused a number of TWIF members to learn the hard way that the price reflects the quality.

DESIGNED TO BE TOUGH

The difference between general-purpose matting and specialist application matting is quite dramatic. Most of the specialist uses relate to farming. This is where the Dunlomat story began because the Dunlop Conveyor Belting factory is located in the Friesland region of The Netherlands, world famous for its Frisian cattle. Local farmers needed matting that not only had good grip but could also withstand heavy livestock and the damage that they could cause with their sharp hooves. At the same time, the matting had to be able to stand the test

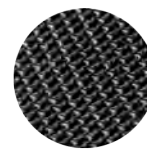
of time in order to be as cost-effective as possible. It was only as time moved on did people realise that this super-tough matting was ideally suited for other demanding situations. Several years ago, indoor tug of war joined the list of specialist applications and the rest, as they say, is history!

WHAT IS DUNLOMAT?

The reason for Dunlomat's success is the combination of an extremely strong yet flexible inner carcass of polyester nylon. This is protected by top quality Dunlop 'Rufftop' super-grip rubber covers on the upper side and a smoother 'fabric print' surface on the underside to make gluing easy. Fixing instructions can be found on the TWIF website. Dunlomat is available in 10mm and 6mm thicknesses. However, for competition purposes the 10mm



RUFFTOP
PROFILE



FABRIC
PRINT

The Rufftop surface – proven to provide better grip than any of its imitators



version in a width of 1000mm and 36 meters long is stipulated by TWIF. Each competition mat weighs a total of more than 325kg so it is important to ensure that there is adequate lifting capacity at the point of delivery. Fortunately, to make offloading and fitting easier, each mat can be delivered in 2 X 18m lengths or 18 X 2m lengths.

WHY SETS DUNLOMAT APART FROM THE REST?

Technically, the biggest difference between Dunlomat and the rest is that only the very best, most durable premium grade rubber is used. This rubber is entirely produced in Dunlop's production facilities in The Netherlands. Unlike most manufacturers who outsource their rubber production, the fact that we make our own enables us to ensure that the quality and performance characteristics are consistent. If two Dunlomat competition mats are laid side by side, there should be no difference in grip or durability.

What also sets Dunlomat apart is its built-in resistance to the damaging effects of ozone and ultra violet and fluorescent light. There is absolutely no question that all rubber matting should be fully resistant to ozone and ultra violet because at ground level, exposure to ozone, which is of course unavoidable, increases the acidity of carbon black surfaces and causes reactions to take place within the molecular structure of the rubber. The most serious consequences are surface cracking and degradation and a marked decrease in tensile strength.

Likewise, ultraviolet light from sunlight and artificial (fluorescent) lighting also accelerates deterioration. This is because it produces photochemical reactions that promote the oxidation of the surface of the rubber resulting in a loss in mechanical strength. In both cases, unless the rubber contains special anti-ozonants, this kind of degradation can start to occur within a matter of months and means that the mats have to be replaced far earlier than should be necessary.

Despite its crucial importance, we have never ever tested a sample of matting imported from Asia that is ozone and UV resistant. This is almost certainly because omitting the anti-ozonants helps to keep the selling price artificially low and the mats needing to be replaced much sooner.

SAFE FOR HUMANS, SAFE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Even more important than the performance and longevity of the matting is its safety in terms of contact with humans, wildlife and the environment as a whole. Nearly all rubber

that is used commercially is synthetic. The primary reason is that to create the physical properties that allow the rubber to serve a specific purpose requires a highly scientific cocktail of chemicals and additives. Fortunately, there are very strong regulations in place to protect humans and the environment in the form of REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemical substances) regulation EC 1907/2006.



Asian manufacturers are not subject to EU regulations concerning the use of dangerous chemicals and pollutants.

These regulations stipulate that all European manufacturers are required to register the use of chemicals, preparations and substances used to create finished products that may pose a hazard to human health and the environment with ECHA (European Chemical Agency) headquarters in Helsinki. Within this classification is the use of any "substance of very high concern" (SVHC) listed within the regulations including those that may have category 2 carcinogenic classifications as well as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP's) that are bioaccumulative* in humans and wildlife and toxic to aquatic organisms, even at low concentrations. (Bioaccumulation occurs when an organism absorbs a substance at a rate faster than the substance is naturally lost or eliminated by the organism)

I am proud to say that from the very beginning, Dunlop have been leading advocates of compliance with these regulations. However, as I touched on earlier, non-European manufacturers are not subject to regulation and are therefore free to use unregulated raw materials, even though they may be entirely prohibited or at least have strict usage limitations within Europe. Unregulated raw materials also cost much less on the global market compared to their regulated counterparts so it further explains how manufacturers located in South East Asia are able to offer such low prices.

BEWARE OF IMITATIONS

Dunlop name is one of the most famous brands in the world and continues to retain its high reputation for quality. It is for this reason that some dishonest manufacturers try to take advantage through imitation. To be 100% clear, Dunlomat tug of war competition matting is only manufactured in the Netherlands by Dunlop Conveyor Belting. Sadly, many traders claim that they can supply genuine Dunlomat even when they are not an authorized Dunlop service partner.

The best way to ensure that you are buying genuine Dunlop 'Made in The Netherlands' tug of war matting is to contact us directly via sales@dunlopcb.com. Alternatively, if someone is claiming to sell genuine Dunlomat then you can quickly and easily check their validity by emailing us at dunlop.validity.check@dunlopcb.com. Simply provide details of the trader and the offer that they have made and we will get back to you to confirm if they are an official Dunlop service partner or not. We have special rates for TWIF members, including free delivery within Europe, so if you are offered a 'cut price' version of Dunlomat then you can be pretty sure that it is not the real thing! Last but not least, Dunlomat competition indoor tug of war matting is covered by a three-year warranty against faulty workmanship and faulty materials.

We do appreciate that most tug of war clubs and associations are not VAT registered. If this applies to you then it is a good idea to try and place your order (and pay the invoice) through a VAT registered company that is willing to give you their support.

Les Williams

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

We are very proud of our long association with the TWIF and the worldwide success of our Dunlomat tug of war competition matting. If you would like more information on Dunlop tug of war matting then please do not hesitate to contact us. Full details of our network of sales offices can be found on our website at www.dunlopcb.com

