

## Padel Court Lighting

**Lighting matters. A good scheme will enhance the playing characteristics of the court. There should be no shadows, no flicker, minimal glare as you look up to an over-head ball, just an even colour of light across the entire playing surface. Alas such results are rare. Facilities all across Europe are guilty of installing poor schemes and then realising later that there are better solutions which provide players with more comfort (and operators with better long-term value).**

LED light fixtures are now widespread which is a good thing in terms of reduced operating costs and broader environmental concerns. If however the LED driver and chip are low quality (which is the way many cheaper products achieve their lower cost) then the lights will flicker. Even if the flicker is only just discernible it will tire your eyes, impair your tracking of the ball and cause a headache through the course of a long match. You may have attributed these symptoms as a consequence to losing – more likely it's poor lighting resulting in your eyes having to work much harder than they should. And for those wishing to record their games in the glorious slow-motion now afforded by camera systems, well they won't be able to as the flicker of regular LEDs interfere with the high frame rate of the latest video systems. No bragging rights for you on social media after that epic victory.

For outdoor courts, zero 'light trespass' is the aim. Asymmetric fittings enable all the light to be directed down onto the playing surface meaning surrounding houses, roads and infrastructure are all blissfully unaware of the fun you're having. The optical reflectors built into asymmetric fittings are able to concentrate the light beam with significantly lower energy costs. The light emission is not wasted on areas where it is not needed meaning the court can be lit with reduced wattage or a smaller number of light sources. Symmetrical light fittings distribute light evenly in all directions and are not intended for outdoor use. Not only is the light going into the intended area (the court) but horizontally and upward. Symmetrical lighting is the main cause of light pollution to neighbouring structures and roadways. When a club installs four courts with symmetrical lighting, the skyglow is dramatically increased. Unhappy neighbours can lead to clubs being closed down, or planning permission being denied in the first place.



**If padel is to thrive in the UK, courts must be lit so that play can be enjoyed from early morning until late in the evening all 12 months of the year.”**

James Sandwith, Padel Plus



**Although a tennis court installation** this image proves the point that a carefully designed lighting scheme will keep all light on court ensuring neither inconvenience nor danger to neighbours

For indoor and canopy-covered courts, light trespass is less an issue but it is still the case that your lighting should stay on court. In addition to asymmetrical fittings you also want to see diffusion lenses to soften the light and reduce glare.

With canopies, PVC covers allow very little natural light to pass through meaning there is a reliance on artificial light for most of the day. They can sometimes feel oppressive. Polycarbonate covers allow a great deal of natural light to reach the court whilst providing in-built diffusion. You are left with a feeling of playing outdoors but with the benefit of protection from the British elements. As the sun sets and it is necessary to turn to LED lighting then the combination of asymmetrical fittings and injection-moulded diffusers will provide the right playing conditions long into the evening, as below.



Padel is a tremendous sport for inclusion: the bounce makes it easier to start playing than squash and the walls contain the ball providing much better potential for rallies than in tennis. We have all enjoyed playing on some courts more than others, and lighting can play a part in that. Better courts enable better padel to be played and whether you're an elite competitor or simply an enthusiast, the right lighting equates to more fun and a better environment in which to welcome first-time players.



**For an outdoor padel court this is what you're looking for:** a MAHA 150 asymmetrical fitting mounted at 0° offering glare-free, flicker-free, even light. Nobody will be able to provide any excuses for a mis-hit other than their own ability and there will be no shadows in which to hide when the inevitable happens.

#### What to look for...

- + 8 LED light fixtures around the perimeter of the court preferably 4 along each side
- + An even light level of 400 Lux over all parts of the court. Light meter apps can be downloaded for your smartphone. 300 Lux is the minimum acceptable light level to ensure comfortable playing conditions.
- + Asymmetrical fittings which ensure all light is directed down onto the playing surface with virtually zero 'light trespass' into adjacent areas.
- + Indoors and under canopies you need a diffusion lens over the LED source to eliminate glare, provide protection from stray balls and to enable uncompromised tracking of the ball.
- + Ideally lights should be wirelessly controlled so that adjustment can be easily made as natural light fades
- + Warranties: higher quality lighting from reputable sources will give you peace of mind that what you have in your club is safe. A minimum warranty should be five years.

**Remember, if you see excessive glare looking up at your lights, if there is any flicker, or if there are shadows on court, you're not having as much fun as you should be and your lighting system needs upgrading.**

#### In This INSIGHT

Asymmetrical fittings  
400 Lux level  
Diffusion lens  
Wireless control  
5 year warranties

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