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THE NARCE ISSUE



RINK

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE UNITED STATES ICE RINK ASSOCIATION | **MAGAZINE**

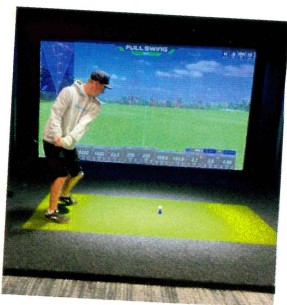
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46

REAL PROGRAMS

Perfect Match

→ Golf simulators could boost your facility's bottom line.



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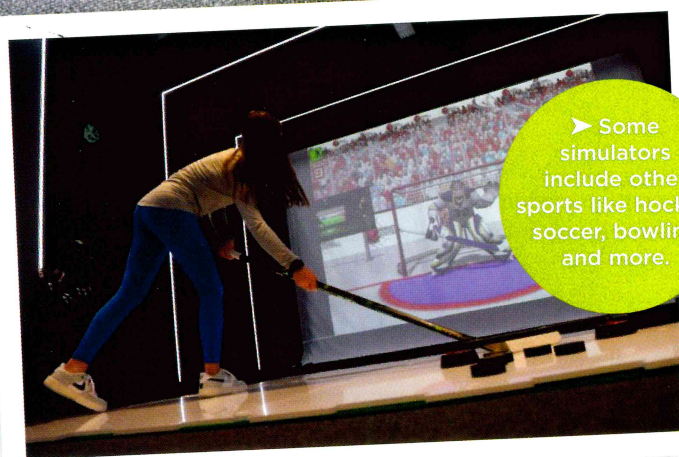
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▶ Golf simulators add excitement and revenue to local ice arenas

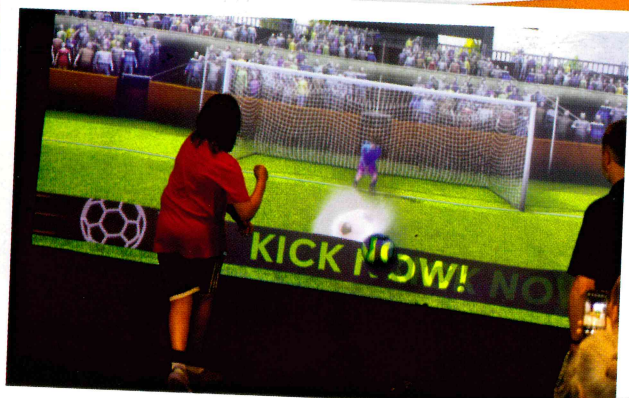
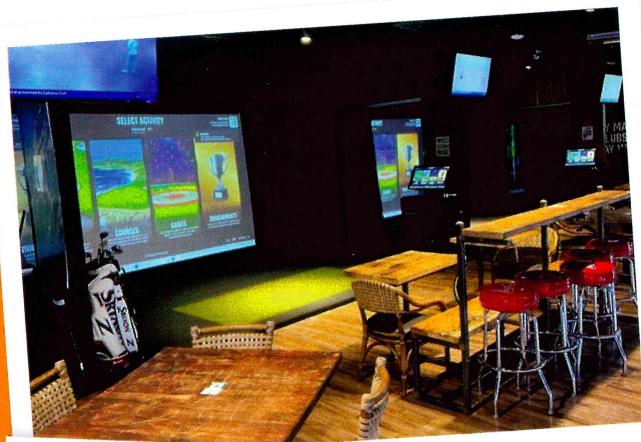
/// by CRAIG PETERSEN, CIRM

A GOLF SIMULATOR INSIDE AN ICE ARENA might not seem like an obvious fit at first—but in reality, it's a natural pairing. Hockey and golf share a similar customer base: families, comparable income levels, and a culture built around leagues, lessons, and repeat visits. Most importantly, an ice arena already has built-in traffic. The real question isn't whether the idea works in theory—it's whether it will be used consistently enough to justify the investment.



▶ Some simulators include other sports like hockey, soccer, bowling and more.

Adding a golf simulator is about turning underutilized space into a year-round revenue stream. In colder climates, where outdoor golf disappears for months, simulators give players, parents, and league members a reason to stay longer and return



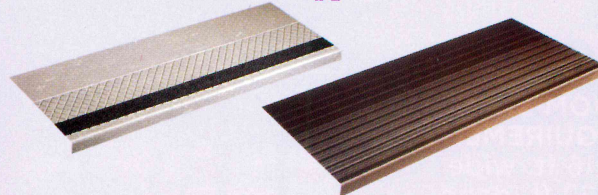
more often. With the right programming—leagues, hourly rentals, birthday parties and corporate events—a simulator can transform a single-sport facility into a multi-use destination that generates income in addition to traditional revenue streams.

The investment can vary widely depending on system quality and buildout. On average, facilities can expect \$15,000 to \$30,000 for a mid-range commercial setup, with higher-end installations reaching \$50,000 or more. This includes the simulator hardware, subscription fees, impact screen, enclosure, and necessary room modifications.

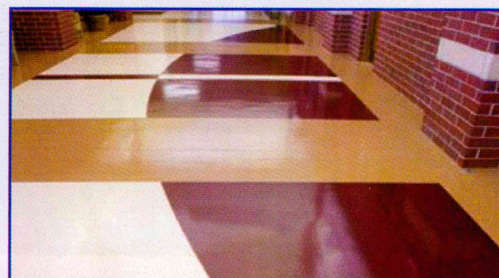
Success depends on careful planning. It's important to evaluate expected demand, opportunity cost of the space, local competition, staffing, and how the simulator will be

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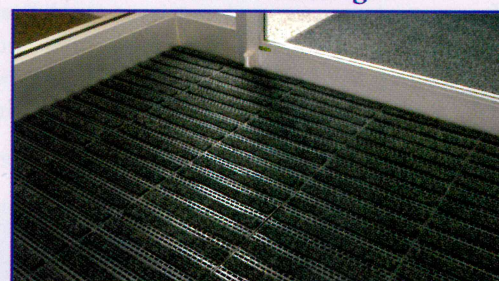
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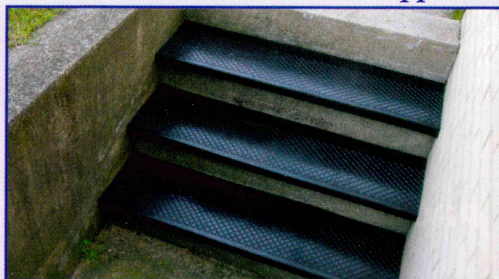
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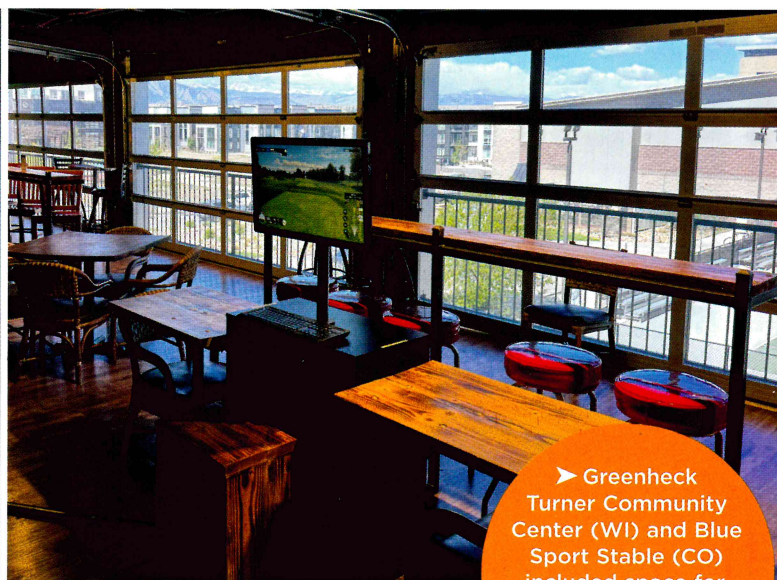
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ROOM SPACE REQUIREMENTS:
14-16 ft. wide
18-22 ft. deep
10 ft. high
(11-12 ft. preferred for safe full swings)



► Greenheck Turner Community Center (WI) and Blue Sport Stable (CO) included space for simulators in their original construction plans.

scheduled and marketed. Ongoing costs like software, maintenance, and repairs should also be factored in.

Modern systems from companies like TrackMan, Full Swing, and Foresight

Sports use high-speed cameras or radar to deliver accurate simulation, and some offer multi-sport capabilities including hockey shooting modes. This makes converting a shooting room into a dual-

use space possible, though not entirely plug-and-play.

Operational design is critical. Many potential customers will not own golf clubs, so providing rental clubs can significantly increase usage and reduce barriers to entry.

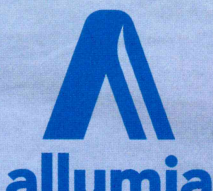
Hockey also introduces unique challenges. Pucks hit harder and lower than golf balls, requiring durable impact screens, padded walls, and ceiling protection. Not all systems track pucks effectively, and switching between hockey and golf setups must be simple to avoid friction in daily use.

One of the most common mistakes is focusing too heavily on simulator hardware instead of the room itself. The space must be built for durability and quick conversion between uses to avoid ongoing damage and repair costs.

Space requirements are also key. Ideally, the room should be 14-16 feet wide, 18-22 feet deep, and at least 10 feet high, with 11-12 feet preferred for safe full swings.

From a financial standpoint, even conservative usage can generate meaningful returns. For example, 15 hours per week at \$40 per hour equals roughly \$2,400 per month, with significantly higher potential through leagues and events.

Ultimately, a golf simulator can be a strong addition to an ice arena—but only when intentionally designed and operated as a revenue-generating asset rather than a standalone feature. ★



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