



Swimming Pool Requirements For Under Water Hockey

By The British Octopush Association



DOCUMENT INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The BOA recognises that to develop Under Water Hockey (UWH) and compete internationally to the highest standard, it is essential that they have access to pools built to specific UWH requirements.

Many local Councils are recognising the lack of pool time available to all clubs and with their ageing pools, spurred on by the Olympic bid, are considering rebuilding their swimming facilities. Councils trying to ensure they can meet all the differing demands and provide the correct capacity need to be aware of the specific needs of UWH when designing these new facilities.

The BOA is being approached by local councils to help provide input to the overall process to ensure that the councils meet all the needs of all the swimming community when designing their new swimming facilities and upgrading their old ones.

1.1 Objectives

The objective of this document is to provide guidance and detail for any local council considering building or refurbishing a swimming pool, for the best configuration to meet UWH requirements for a standard 25m x 12m, 25m x 8 lane or 50m pools.

1.2 Scope

This document is to be used by any local council considering building or refurbishing a pool and wishes to understand the requirements in order to meet the needs of UWH. It is also intended to be used by architects in designing these facilities so that UWH may be integrated, such that it does not conflict with the requirements of other disciplines, such as lane swimming, water polo and canoe polo.

2. What is Under Water Hockey?

Under Water Hockey was invented in 1954 by Alan Blake at Southsea BSAC. It was conceived to keep sub-aqua divers fit and stop them getting bored during the winter. It is now played worldwide in 36 countries and in August 2006 Sheffield is hosting the 14th World Championships.

The sport is played at the bottom of the pool with 10 players in each team, 6 in the water with 4 players who can be substituted at any time (similar to Ice Hockey). The objective of the game is to slide a plastic covered lead puck along the bottom of the pool and score more goals than the opposing team. The equipment worn is mask, snorkel, fins, and a small stick (pusher) to push the puck along the bottom of the pool. In a competition a game may last up to 30 minutes and a team may play many games during a competition. UWH is a non contact sport, and it is both physically demanding and equally skillful. It may take a new player at least 2 years to become competitively competent. There are 3 referees controlling the game, 2 in the water and a chief referee who is overall in charge and controls the game from the side.

UWH is enjoyed and played competitively by both junior and senior players. The teams are organized onto a ladder, where teams compete for position on the ladder. UWH also allows mixed sex teams to play and compete, and because the ladies are generally out numbered by men when training, they have been quick to acquire better puck skills than their male counterparts who tend to rely more on their physical strength, to propel the puck forwards.

The many competitions organized by clubs and the BOA provides teams with the opportunity to come together to realize their months of hard work and training and hopefully be rewarded by another step up the ladder. The UWH community being a tight knit community enjoys a strong sense of camaraderie, whose members have made



friends from many clubs around the country. Competition allows members to meet new and old friends and it is now customary that after a competition, food and drink are provided, which makes competitions a great social occasion for all.

To find out more about our sport please visit our website at www.gbuwh.co.uk.

3. The Benefits of Under Water Hockey

The clubs that enjoy full support from their local council have been able to develop to become large successful clubs and whose membership have been able to grow in some cases up to 80+ members, of which more than half of these have been juniors.

Encouraging UWH to be played and supporting the club's development brings many benefits to a pool, the community and to the people participating in the sport, these include:

- Greater number of regular swimmers to the pool facility, also bringing additional financial benefits
- Greater diversity of activities at the facility, giving more choices to keep fit and healthy
- Greater number of competitions held at the pool facility. Larger competitions draw competitors from far and wide, nationally and internationally.
- It is a great sport to get fit and stay fit and is played by all ages ranging from 8 to 60+. The sport is open to all ages and we have had many instances of new players starting to play the sport aged 40+.
- With the proper facilities and support, generating interest amongst juniors has proven very successful and where this has been possible, the clubs enjoy a high membership of juniors, even during teenage years when some sports suffer from the lack of commitment.
- The sport is also enjoyed by swimmers with disabilities and who are able to play equally alongside their other abled counterparts
- The fact you are fully submersed and therefore your weight is fully supported, results in that you do not suffer from the same kind of impact injuries associated with other sports such as rugby, football, squash etc but still remains a very competitive and demanding sport. This attracts many new players to UWH from other sports at any age and at any level of fitness.
- The sport also forms good physiotherapy for anyone wanting to get fit again following musculoskeletal disorders.
- Since this sport is very much a cardiovascular activity i.e. heart and lungs, it brings tremendous health benefits
- As a way of keeping fit in the water and provide an alternative to swimming up and down the lanes
- Within the UWH community there is a tremendous camaraderie between members nationwide and all new comers quickly warm to this well-knit UWH community

4. Basic UWH Pool Configuration

UWH is played in pools of varying sizes and depths and can be incorporated into any design of pool, even one with a traditional shallow end. The International rules specify a pool of between 12m and 15m wide, 21m and 25m long and between 2m and 3.65m deep (See appendix A). However, this is not essential for local training, matches, leagues and tournaments. The standard markings are shown in Appendix B and can be adapted to suit any local requirements, whilst still giving UWH the opportunity to utilise the facilities to the maximum.

The colour of the UWH markings need only be of a pale/light colour and need only be visible to the referees and players wearing masks in close proximity of the markings.



This will prevent the UWH marking clashing with black lines used in lane swimming along the length of the 25m pool.

The goals are tin trays, which are laid at each end of the pitch. Inclusion of these in the tiled bottom is an advantage, which can avoid the manual handling and storage of these cumbersome items.

5. UWH in a 25m 8 Lane Swimming Pool

To accommodate a tiled bottom UWH pitch as described in section 4 within a 25m x 8 lane competition pool (Appendix C), the best configuration would be for a single UWH pitch, whose length runs across the width of the pool. The ideal width of the pool would be between 21m and 25m; this would leave the remaining dimensions of the UWH pitch to have a width of 12m and a constant depth of 2m. The UWH markings would conform as detailed in Appendix B and would be on a tiled bottom to provide the best surface for UWH. All this would allow the pool not just to be a good training pool but also to conform to national and international competition rules, suitable for competitions at all levels. To allow an UWH club to invite national and international teams to play in their pool would bring great benefits to the club and the facility.

The markings should conform to the standards laid out in section 4 and shown in appendix B.

The remaining half of the pool would allow a moveable bottom to be installed to provide different depths suitable for all other types of pool instruction and training. Having this configuration would allow the pool to be divided in 2 giving the potential for the pool to be hired to 2 different activities or clubs (See Appendix C).

6. UWH in a 50m Swimming Pool

To accommodate a tiled bottom UWH pitch with dimensions of 21/25m x 12m x 2m within a 50m x 8/10 lane competition pool (Appendix A), the best configuration would be to have 2 UWH pitches covering 20/25 x 25m at one end of the pool, whose length runs across the width of the pool. The ideal width of the pool would be between 21m and 25m; this would leave the remaining dimensions of the 2 UWH pitches to have a width of 12m and a constant depth of 2m. The UWH markings would conform as detailed in Appendix B and would be on a tiled bottom to provide the best surface for UWH. This would allow the pool not just to be a good training pool but also to conform to national and International rules, suitable for competitions at all levels. To allow your UWH club to invite national and international teams to play in the pool would bring great benefits to the club and the facility. The provision of two UWH pitches would allow for larger competitions to be hosted at the facility.

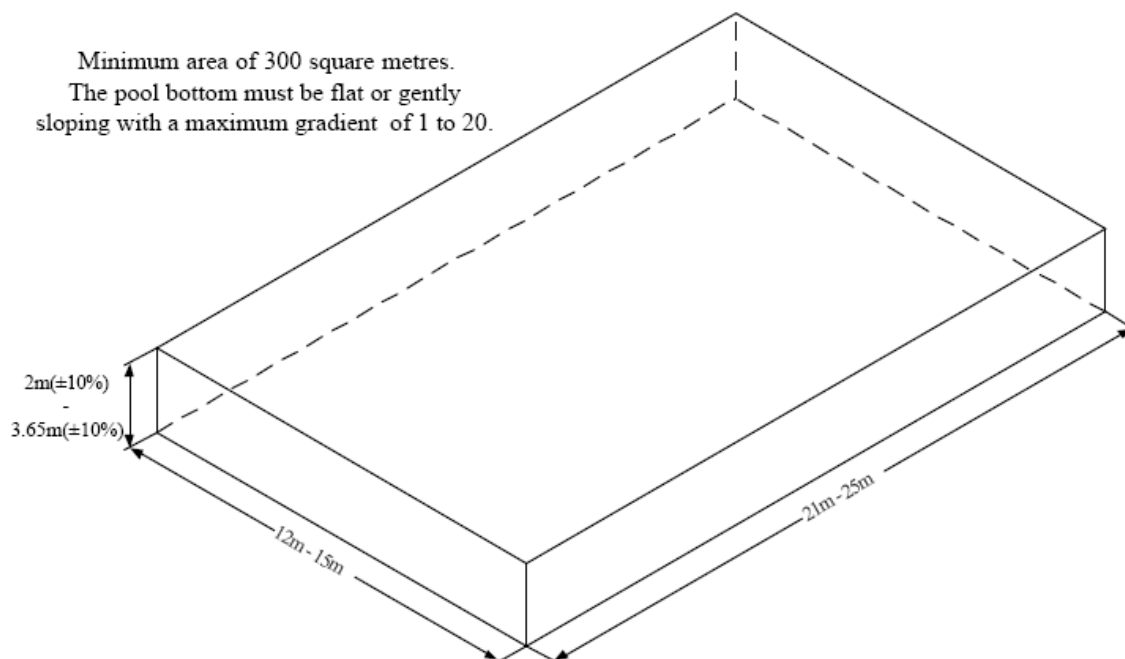
The markings should conform to the standards laid out in section 4.

The remaining half of the pool would allow a moveable bottom to be installed to provide different depths suitable for all other types of pool instruction and training. Having this configuration would allow the pool to be divided in 2 giving the potential for the pool to be hired to 2 different activities or clubs thus bringing in greater revenue (See Appendix D).

7. Appendix A– UWH Pool Dimensions

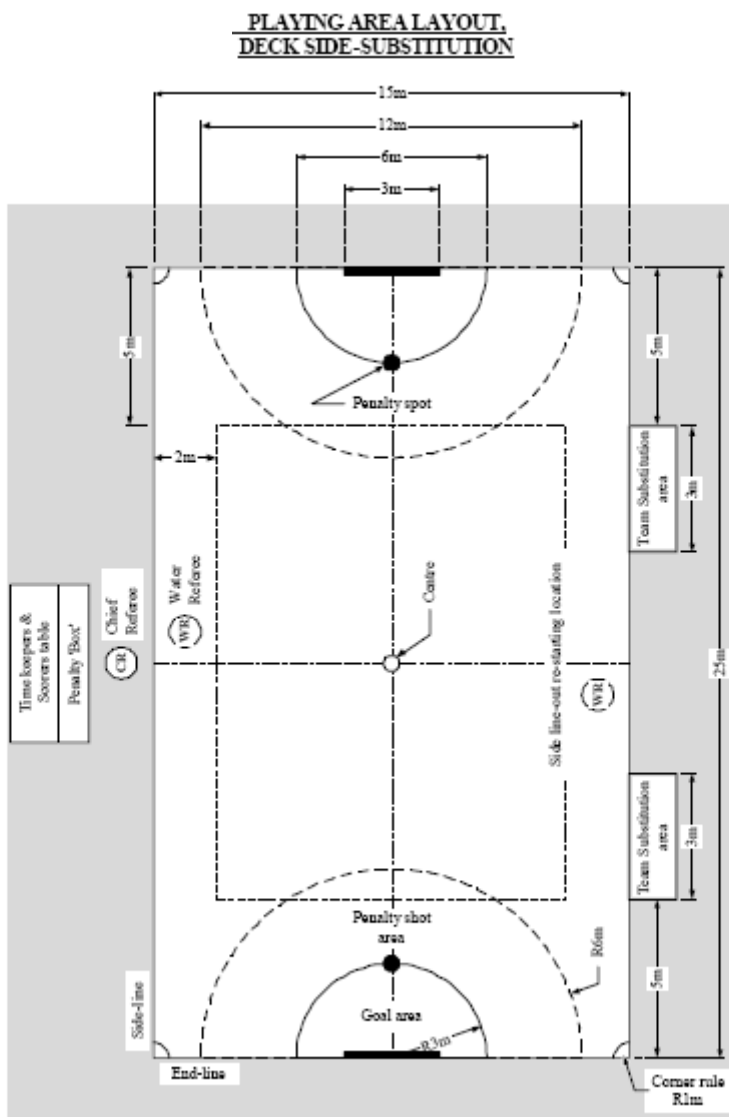
APPENDIX “A” PLAYING AREA DIMENSIONS

Minimum area of 300 square metres.
The pool bottom must be flat or gently sloping with a maximum gradient of 1 to 20.

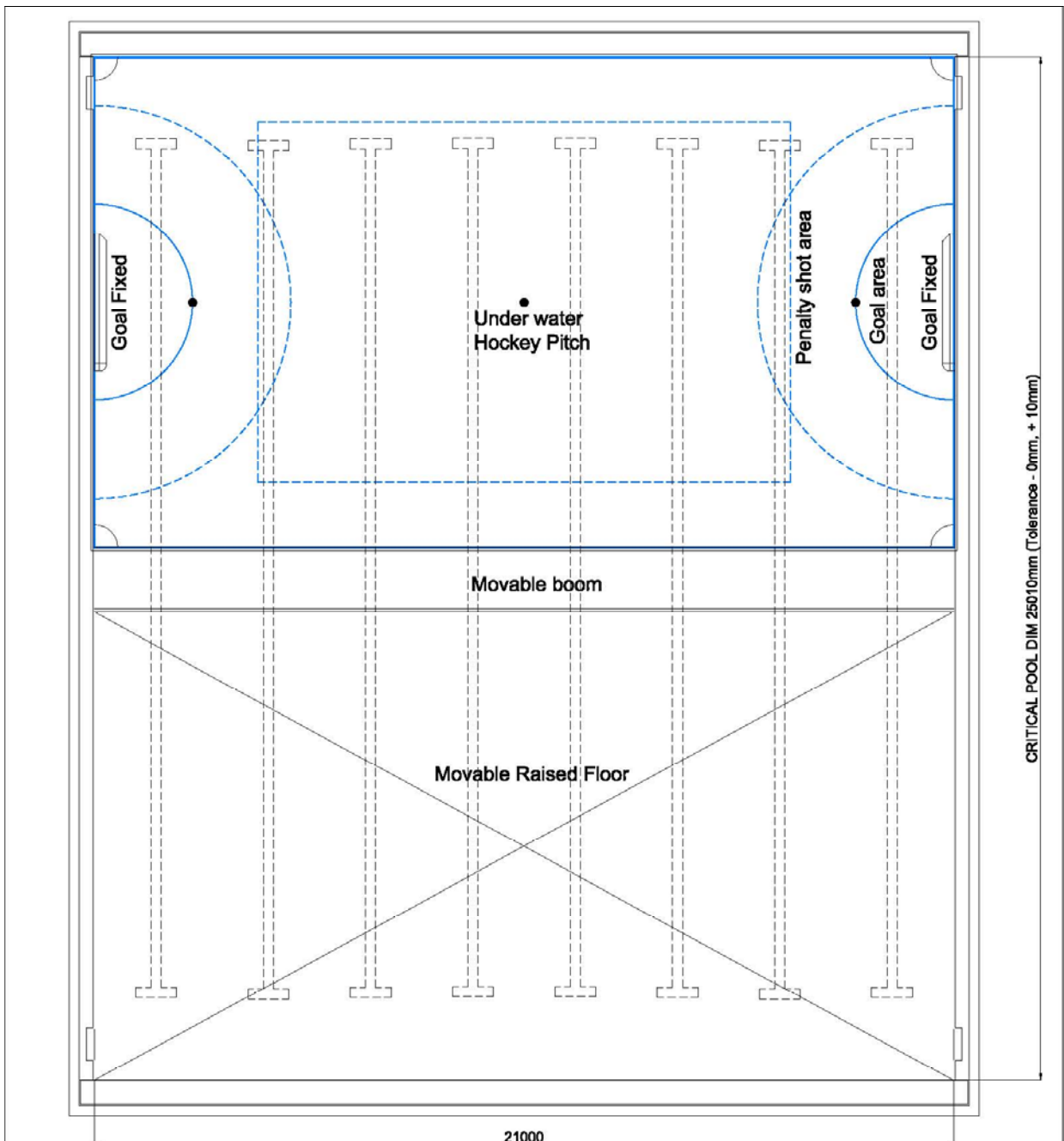


*The depth of the water shall be between 2m and 3.65m, with a ±10% allowance with the approval of the Games Commissioner. Pools shallower than 2m must be considered “fast and safe” by the World Tournament Director

8. Appendix B– UWH Pool Markings Layout



9. Appendix C– 25m x 8 Lane Swimming pool



Typical Layout of 25m pool (With Under water Hockey Pitch layout)

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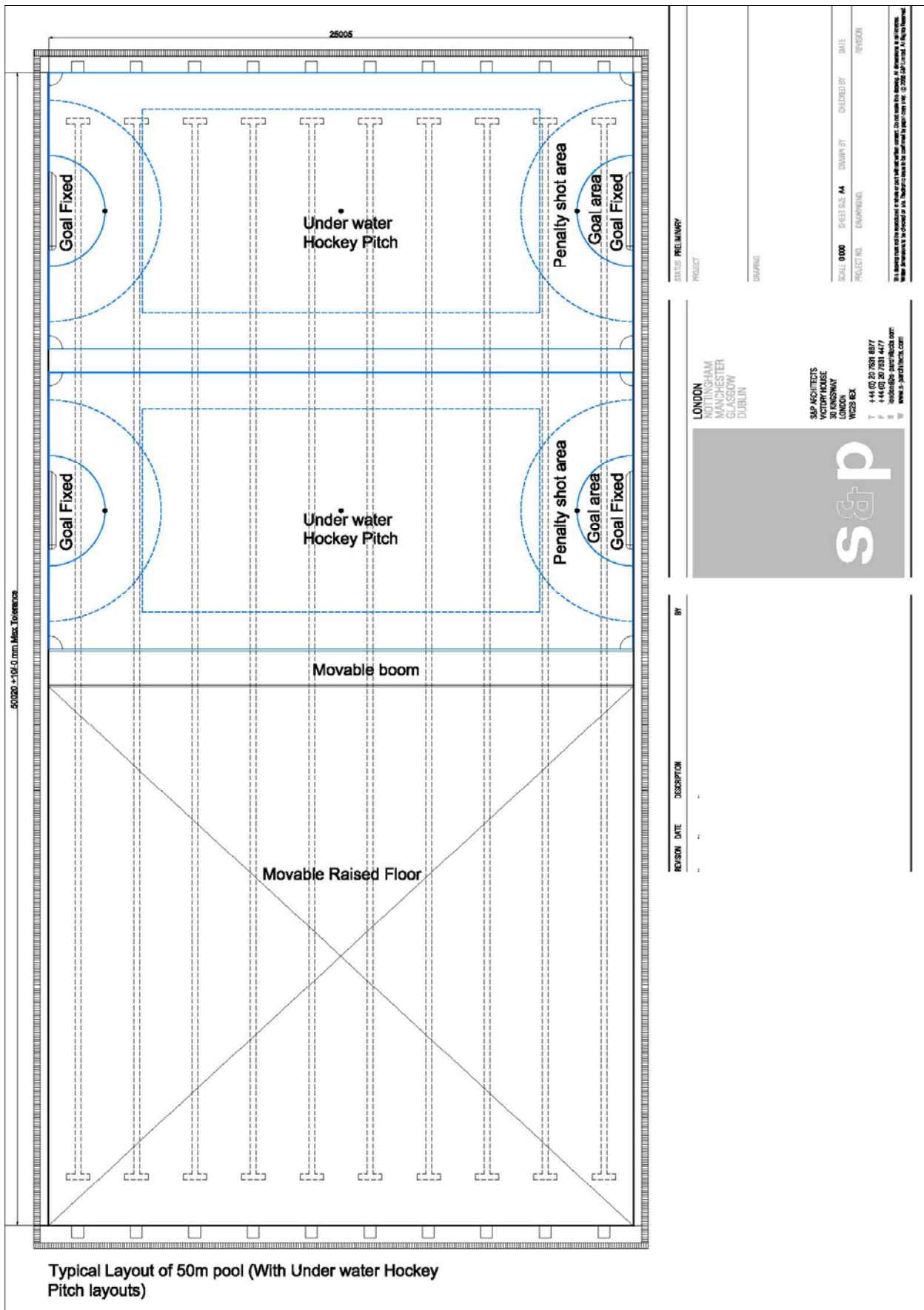
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10. Appendix D– 50m Swimming Pool



Typical Layout of 50m pool (With Under water Hockey Pitch layouts)

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