

Fencing mesh – some pitfalls of using new suppliers in the market

For many years there has really only been one fabricator of chainmesh used for tennis court fencing in Queensland and they produced only 50mm diamond chainmesh. This mesh size is unique to Queensland as the fabricators in the southern states typically produce 45mm diamond mesh, which is more expensive as there is more steel per square metre of material. Also, if anyone in Queensland wanted to have this smaller 45mm mesh, it also cost extra to freight this material up from the southern states on top of the higher fabrication cost by weight.

The 50mm mesh provided by this primary fabricator in Queensland is still suitable for our courts as their quality control is pretty good and it was rare for these diamonds to exceed 50mm in size and therefore allowing minimal occurrences of tennis balls being able to pass or squeeze through this mesh.

However, it has come to our attention recently there are some new fabricators in the market producing chainmesh claiming to be suitable for tennis court fences. However, their quality control on the fabrication of this mesh has not been as good, resulting in chainmesh with diamonds of 52-55mm in size, which does result in a higher percentage of balls being able to pass or squeeze through them. These fabricators are refusing to acknowledge their chainmesh is unsuitable for tennis court usage and are using a loophole in the relevant Australian Standard for fencing, which allows for a tolerance of +/-10% on the specified diamond size. This actually happened on a recent significant tennis project on the Gold Coast, and is now being rectified post completion of the works. This is a situation we would not like to see occur again on another project in Queensland.

This is something all of our affiliated clubs and schools, as well as Council and State Government project specifiers need to be aware of for their current and future fencing projects. Tennis Queensland have recently altered their standard specifications for tender documents we prepare to address this situation. Instead of the traditional specification requirement of 50mm diamond chainmesh, our specifications will now specifically state the chainmesh diamonds cannot exceed 50mm in size, and any mesh installed and found to exceed this 50mm maximum requirement will be rejected and replaced at the contractor's expense.

The alternative is specifying 45mm diamond chainmesh. However, this mesh would be more expensive to manufacture, essentially be fabricated outside of Queensland and transported up here from the southern states. It is estimated using this 45mm chainmesh would add approximately 20% or more to the cost of tennis court fencing than using 50mm maximum diamond chainmesh produced locally here in Queensland.

If you have any further questions in relation to this issue, please contact Tennis Queensland's Facilities Development Manager, Michael Blomer for more information or to discuss your current or future tennis court fencing project.