

Many consumers ask us for our opinion as to what products to buy, who to buy from, and how much should they pay for what product. Customers value our opinion because we no longer actually sell to consumers; we merely facilitate a sale by connecting the consumer to a source.

Currently, we are going into the outdoor basketball court construction season. I suggest that consumers compare basketball systems based on the following four criteria's in the following order.

1. Pole size; OD for round poles and side x side for square poles plus the thicker the wall thickness, the longer it will last. Square is stronger than round. Filling hollow poles that are directly buried into the ground with cement will keep water from getting into them, freezing, mushrooming the pole out, cracking off the paint coating prematurely, leading to premature corrosion failure and this will also take shake out of the pole and system ... it makes a small pole play like a large pole. Value starts at the base, so invest in a system that makes sense for you. Many systems look pretty good; you would not want a cheezy cheap system in front of a real nice expensive home. "Black" is known as the disappearing color, these poles don't seem to stand out so much in front of a nice home. If you are putting in a \$4000 court; I would not put a small inexpensive hoop on it. If all you are going to do is shoot on it, or if you have a lot of slope on your driveway court, a lighter, less expensive system will last for life and is right for you. If you are going to play varsity, or have played varsity, and you still actively play "21" you will want a serious hoop. Retailers run their best sales in spring and fall. Many of your best value, serious hoop but smaller manufacturers don't even try to sell until May 1st when the retailer sales are over.

2. Setback, backboard to pole, the better the pole - the greater the set back. A regulation court has 4 foot between the backboard to the end out-of-bounds line. The first shot to learn is right and left hand speed layups; if you don't have at least 4 feet between backboard and pole, it is hard to make a layup without worrying that you will run into the pole. Padded or not padded, it still hurts!

3. Backboard size and material. A regulation backboard is made of tempered glass and is 42 inches by 72 inches and is statistically warranted for life in schools. Many rebounding drills for forwards can be done on 72 inch boards that are much harder to conduct on small boards. Retail boards often times have poor warranties, and they do break; so make sure you know what you are getting and what the risk is! You can get home systems with lifetime warranties. However, "NOTHING PLAYS LIKE GLASS!!".

4. Backboard thickness. A regulation backboard is made of tempered glass and is 1/2" THICK (42 inches by 72 inches) and is statistically warranted for life in schools. Automobile windshields are 1/8 " thick and use curvature to strengthen them; and you know you can get free steaks with a windshield replacement - they do break, so be careful. However, "NOTHING PLAYS LIKE GLASS!!".