



A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE THROUGH SPORT

# A Guide To Visually Impaired Friendly Sport





Visually Impaired Friendly Sport

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# Introduction

Welcome to the British Blind Sport 'Guide to Visually Impaired Friendly Sport' produced in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport and Guide Dogs UK.

At British Blind Sport we believe that every person with a visual impairment (VI) has the right to participate in sport and physical activity. We understand that there are many hurdles and barriers to overcome in order for each and every VI person to have the same accessibility as a sighted person. This resource has been created with the specific purpose to assist anyone who is delivering sport and physical activities with support, ideas and guidance on how to include people with a visual impairment.

This resource is all about helping sport providers to be VI friendly through their provision of activities, training, resources and support. These include:

- Sports Coaches
- PE Teachers
- Community Coaches
- Multi-sport / Multi-skill Coaches
- Sports Clubs
- Volunteers
- Fitness Industry Professionals
- Sport Development Professionals

This resource will enable coaches, leaders and parents/carers to:

- Learn about sight loss and eye conditions.
- Have a better understanding of the needs of people with a visual impairment.
- Apply their knowledge to meet the needs of people with a visual impairment.
- Use basic communication skills to support the needs of people with a visual impairment in sport and physical activity.
- Understand where you can obtain further support to ensure your club/group is fully accessible and inclusive to people with a visual impairment.

**By making small and simple adaptations you will be able to include people with a visual impairment in your sports and activity sessions. The information and tips that you will find in this resource will be beneficial to all the participants in your group, not just people with a visual impairment.**





British Blind Sport is committed to providing sport and recreational opportunities for all blind and partially sighted children and adults across Great Britain. Our work ensures that we are able to provide support from grassroots

through to elite level.

Sport and recreation can be so much more than the activity itself. As British Blind Sport sees sport as the springboard for wider opportunities, increased health benefits, new friendships and renewed confidence. The positive effects of participation in sport for a visually impaired person, irrespective of ability or experience, cannot be underestimated. We also know that ensuring participation in sport is a positive experience for a visually impaired person is often due to a skilled and confident coach or teacher. This resource is a fantastic tool for those coaches and teachers who want to help others achieve their goals and who are committed to making a visible difference through sport.

**Alaina MacGregor**  
**British Blind Sport**



Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) is delighted to be working with British Blind Sport in the production of a resource which will accompany workshops which promote inclusive sport. The workshop has been designed by RNIB Scotland and Guide Dogs UK

in conjunction with SDS to allow coaches, teachers, volunteers and anyone working with participants with a visual impairment to grow in confidence and competence.

**Gavin Macleod**  
**Scottish Disability Sport**



Guide Dogs and Blind Children UK are genuinely delighted to support this initiative to enable blind and partially sighted people to participate in sport. For those with sight loss, being able to enjoy the same freedom

of independent movement as everyone else is critical, with personal mobility and navigation skills playing a major part. Getting out and about safely enables people to make the most of the opportunities available, to participate fully in their communities, and to live the life they choose. To support this, Guide Dogs and Blind Children UK offer a wide range of services to adults and children with sight loss, including practical support and advice, white cane mobility and life skills training, the provision of guide dogs, and volunteer 'sighted guides', to those for whom a dog is not suitable. We believe this initiative is a vital enabler to encourage visually impaired people of all ages to actively engage in sport with all the mental, social and physical benefits this brings.

**Richard Leaman**  
**Guide Dogs UK**



# Understanding Sight Loss

## Sight Loss

Sight is classified in more than one measure. The main measures are 'Visual acuity' and 'Visual field'.

**Visual acuity** is a person's ability to see fine detail.

**Visual field** is the boundaries of what a person can see in one instant i.e. the entire area which can be seen without moving the eyes.

Sight loss is broken down into two main categories; severely sight impaired and sight impaired:

### Severely sight impaired

- **This category is also known as blind.**
- Under government legislation, a person who is severely sight impaired would be unable to perform a job for which eyesight is an essential element for the task.
- They will not be able to see a demonstration.
- They may become quickly disorientated during an activity.

### Sight impaired

- **This category is also known as partially sighted.**
- Partially sighted people will have some useful vision that they can use to navigate the world.
- They may not be able to see a demonstration.
- They may not be able to recognise you from a distance.

## Eye Conditions

There are a number of conditions that result in sight loss. These varying conditions affect blind and partially sighted people in different ways. For example, a visually impaired person may be totally blind or have blurred peripheral vision. It is important to remember that people are individuals with different levels of vision and varying support needs. There are four conditions that cause the majority of sight loss amongst visually impaired people:

### Macular Degeneration

Macular degeneration is an eye condition that affects a small part of the retina at the back of the eye called the macular. It causes a loss of vision in the centre of the visual field, affecting vision when looking directly at something. People with this condition will usually have peripheral vision, but may struggle to recognise the faces of their teammates.



## Glaucoma

Glaucoma causes a loss of peripheral vision due to damage to the optic nerve or increased eye pressure. This condition occurs gradually and will result in a significant reduction of peripheral vision over time. While treatment exists for glaucoma, it can't repair the existing sight loss.



## Cataracts

Cataracts cause blurred or cloudy vision, as result of yellowy pigment on the lens of the eyes. This condition is the main cause of visual impairment across the globe. To treat cataracts, surgery can be used to remove the cloudy lens.



## Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic retinopathy can affect anyone with diabetes. It causes floaters and blurred vision, resulting from damage to the retina due to high blood sugar levels.



## Other conditions

Along with these four conditions, there are many other causes of sight loss. Visit the RNIB website for information on a specific eye condition. While there are a vast number of eye conditions, the simulations above provide an overview of how sight loss affects visually impaired people.

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health/eye-conditions>



# BENEFITS OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The emotional effect of having a visual impairment cannot be quantified. Sport and physical activity can be a very effective catalyst to ensuring a healthier and happier lifestyle.

“33% of inactive visually impaired people want to do more sport.” (BBS Barriers to Participation)

“Nearly half of blind and partially sighted people feel ‘moderately’ or ‘completely’ cut off from people and things around them.” (Pey, Nzegwu and Dooley, 2006)

This research and data demonstrates how important sport it is to encourage people who are visually impaired to get involved in sport and physical activity. Sport and recreation is not just a hobby for someone with a visual impairment but provides an opportunity to:

- tackle social exclusion.
- make new friends.
- raise confidence and self esteem.
- develop spatial awareness and muscle strength.
- provide a sense of accomplishment and achievement.

## Preparation

As with any sports or activity session, preparation is paramount. The following adages are a good reminder to sports coaches and leaders of the importance of preparation.

- **P**rior **P**lanning **P**revents **P**oor **P**erformance
- Fail to Plan – Plan to Fail

This section will outline some key factors to consider when delivering sport sessions to people with a visual impairment which will help with planning and ensure that the participant has a quality experience.

## Advertising

The promotion and marketing of your sports session, club or activity is important to ensure people are aware of what your club offers, where you are located and what activities and programmes are accessible.

The way in which a people with a visual impairment communicate and source information may be different to sighted people, so it is important to consider the following when advertising sessions:

- Provide information in an accessible format if required (e.g. braille, clear print or suitable electronic version for a screen reader).
- Advertise your sessions with local and national VI organisations such as British Blind Sport, RNIB or your local Blind Society.
- Many County Councils or Local Authorities provide a Sight Support Service for people living with sight loss. This could be an excellent method to promote your club or sessions to your target audience and engage with visually impaired people. British Blind Sport can advise on your local contacts. Contact BBS for further information.
- Use social media to promote your services. Evolving technology makes social media a very accessible and popular medium for visually impaired people.’

- Use appropriate images of visually impaired athletes in your marketing material. This will directly speak to your target market and help to inspire other visually impaired people to take part.

### Further Reading

- British Blind Sport has developed a guide to creating documents in an accessible format. This can be found at [www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk)
- EFDS Inclusive Communications Guide: <http://bit.ly/efdsguide>

### Travel

Following British Blind Sport research into 'Overcoming Barriers to Participation' a key barrier identified by visually impaired people is travel.

As many VI people rely heavily on public transport it is advisable to check public transport options and promote the nearest train station or bus route in any promotional or marketing material.

Additionally, there may be community transport options available. Local Sight Support Services will be able to provide information as to what services may be available.

Some participants may rely on a sighted guide or support worker who may assist the participant in getting to and from your club or session.

### Session Venue and Time

It might be necessary to provide a meet and greet service for a visually impaired participant, especially on their first visit to a club, venue or session. This can be discussed and arranged during any prior communication with a visually impaired participant.

Ensure that staff at the venue have been briefed that a VI person will be attending the session.

It is important to consider how sunlight, and the time of the session may affect a visually impaired participant. Indoor poorly lit spaces

may be particularly difficult for a visually impaired person. Floodlights also may cause difficulty – where possible and if practical, organise sessions in good light or evenly lit indoor spaces.

### Equipment and Facilities

To ensure a visually impaired person can be included in your session you may need to source some accessible equipment.

For visually impaired sport, the adaptations made to sports or games are as simple as making some of the equipment larger or brighter - so easier to see - or audible (able to hear).

Jingle Balls – balls with ball bearings in them are popular sports equipment for VI sports, such as Cricket, Goalball, Football. Jingleballs are available from the RNIB.

Sound Balls – tennis balls with bells inserted inside used for tennis.

Tactile markings – using raised tape, or taping string to the boundaries of a playing area will help a VI person understand where a court, pitch or playing area is.

It is advisable to guide a visually impaired person around the venue or facility to help with orientation.

Consider the acoustics in the facility, is it easy for instructions/explanations to be heard?

### Further Reading

Sport England Accessibility Audit Check List

<https://www.sportengland.org/media/30255/Accessible-Sports-Facilities-Audit-Check-List-October-2012.pdf>

BBS Barriers to Participation research

<http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk/overcoming-barriers-to-participation/introduction/>

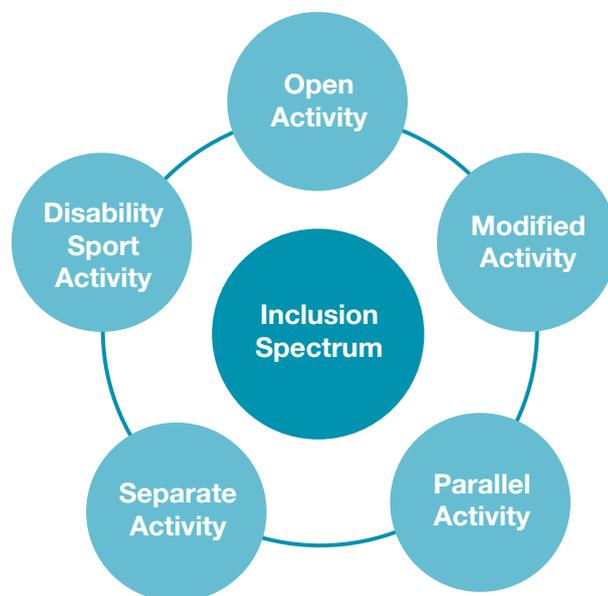


# Coaching Sessions

## The Inclusion Spectrum

The Inclusion Spectrum is an activity based model, developed by Stevenson and Black (2007), which enables coaches to understand what inclusion is and how to include disabled people in sport and physical activity sessions.

It is widely used in the disability sport industry and accepted by sport coaches and sport coaching professional bodies as the most effective model.



### Open Activity

**A simple activity in which anyone can participate with little or no modification**

One an example of an open sports activity is swim training, where all participants are participating in the same activity at the same time. (or a group fitness session).

### Parallel Activity

**Participants are split into groups according to ability. Each group will complete the same task but at levels appropriate to their skill, fitness or they in which they play the game.**

Using a football session as an example, a parallel activity would involve a small group practicing a passing drill with a larger ball with ball bearings, whilst the rest of the group completed the practice at the same time using standard equipment.

### Modified Activity

**Everyone completes the same task but with some adaptations to the rules, playing area or equipment to support the inclusion of everyone**

An example of a modified sports activity could be during a tennis sessions, when a larger ball may be used to help a visually impaired person to see the ball.

### Separate Activity

**Individuals or groups purposefully participate in a different activity.**

A separate activity may be necessary to help a visually impaired participant develop a certain skill or technique. This could involve working 1-2-1 with an individual. It is important to note that a separate activity should not be used all of the time.

### Disability Sport Activity

**All the participants play a disability specific sport or game. This is an example of reverse integration.**

An example of a Disability Sport Activity would be to include all participants in the sport of Goalball. This will not only ensure all participants are included in a session but help all participants develop other skills, such as communication and team work.

# Case Study: Disability Sport Activity - A Practical Example



## Goalball

Goalball is a game played by two teams of three players with a maximum of three substitutions on each team. It is open to both male and female visually impaired athletes. Sighted players can also play domestically.

The object of the game is to score a goal by bowling the ball along the floor so that it crosses the goal line of the opposing team. The defending team has to prevent the ball going into their goal by stopping it while remaining in their team area. They must then try to control the ball and attack by bowling the ball back again thereby trying to score in the other goal.

- All players wear eyeshades so that they are totally blindfolded.
- Goalball is played on an indoor court that is 18m long and 9m wide.
- The ball contains internal bells, which help players locate it during play.

Including Goalball as part of a session requires minimum adaption, only eyeshades or some form of blindfold and a ball with internal bells. Further information: [www.goalballuk.com](http://www.goalballuk.com)



# STEPS Principles

The principles of STEPS provide a framework to assist sports coaches to make adaptations to specific elements of coaching and activity sessions. These elements are: space, task, equipment, people and speed.

Adaptions can be made to the whole group or for just an individual.

It is important to remember that not all visually impaired people will require the same adaptations, just as not every participant will have the same abilities and needs.

Listed below are some examples of what you will need to consider to ensure the inclusion of visually impaired participant.

## Space

- Organise the coaching/playing area in the way for each session. This will help assist orientation.
- Guide a visually impaired participant around the facility and coaching space/playing area and describe features.
- Consider the impact of light during the session.

## Task

- Give clear oral explanations. Practice with another coach by asking them to close their eyes, then describe the activity to them and see how much they understand.
- It may be necessary to provide details of complex skills, drills or rules to the VI participant in large print or electronically so that they are able to read instructions to better understand the task and session.

## Equipment

- Use auditory balls.
- Use larger, brighter equipment.
- Consider the colour of equipment. Avoid placing green cones on the grass. Wear brightly coloured clothes to ensure you are recognisable.
- Create tactile makers to determine the boundaries of playing areas. This can easily be created by using tape and string.

## People

- Create a buddy system with other participants who can help, support and assist a visually impaired participant.
- Some sports such as cycling, running will require a specialist sighted training partner.

## Speed

- Slow down the practice or game to ensure the skill is practiced and learnt effectively.

# Case Study: Jordan, Age 12

## Movement Matters



**Case Study:** Movement Matters - Habilitation training from Blind Children UK

Habilitation, which is provided through the 'Movement Matters' service by Blind Children UK provides training to help blind children and young people move around safely and independently.

Sighted children learn by watching others; children with a visual impairment often need to be specifically taught skills and concepts they would not otherwise pick up. Habilitation provides personalised training and support in mobility, orientation and independence skills from babyhood to adulthood. Habilitation training unlocks possibilities – helping children and their families to understand that sight loss does not have to be a barrier to reaching their potential.

### **How has Habilitation helped Jordan?**

Jordan has learnt the skills to use a long cane and he can now walk independently when out and about with his family.

### **What Jordan says about his support?**

“All the support I’ve had has helped me lots. It has improved my confidence and my independence.”

### **Parent’s Comments.**

“Jordan feels a lot more confident with his cane and it has helped him enormously. I feel I can let go of him now and try and let him be a confident young man. Keeping up his training will be invaluable to him in the future.”

As a result of this intervention Jordan is better equipped and motivated to be more active which is just one outcome from Movement Matters service.

**Independence skills allow better access to sport through improved access, fitness and confidence.**

**For further information about the Movement Matters service contact Blind Children UK – contact details can be found at the back of this resource.**



# Communicating with Visually Impaired people

It is important to understand the needs of a visually impaired person. Do not be afraid to ask questions to obtain as much information as you can that will aid in coaching and delivery.

- Always ask a VI person how much they can see.
- Find out if the VI person has had any sight previously. This may affect their understanding of a sport, game or task.
- Try to establish if there is a preferred situation or environment that promotes better vision, for example a VI person may have better vision in

their left eye, so by making a small change to where you stand to demonstrate a skill or task may make a huge difference.

Can the VI person access the venue independently? Do they need support in the changing area? To overcome any safety issues with young children discuss options with the child's parents, guardians or carers beforehand.

- Remember to always to introduce yourself by name to a VI participant.

## Correct Terminology

It is important to always use the correct terminology when referring to people with a visual impairment and discussing sight loss in general. Using the wrong type of language can create a barrier so by using appropriate terminology it will help you build lasting relationships with your participants and grow your participation programmes.

Words to use	Words to avoid
Person with a visual impairment	The blind
Person with sight loss	The handicapped
Visually impaired person	The disabled
Partially sighted people	Visually impaired
Blind people	(when referring to an individual)
has an impairment	Suffers from

While it is important to use correct terminology, do not over think every sentence you say. For example, saying the term 'See you later' will not be offensive.

## Further Reading

- Media Guide to reporting on persons with an impairment; International Paralympic Committee:

[http://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/document/141027103527844\\_2014\\_10\\_31+guide+to+reporting+on+persons+with+an+impairment.pdf](http://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/document/141027103527844_2014_10_31+guide+to+reporting+on+persons+with+an+impairment.pdf)

- EFDS Inclusive Communications Guide – Access for all: inclusive communications

[http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/case\\_studies/2697\\_access\\_for\\_all\\_efds\\_inclusive\\_communications\\_guide](http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/case_studies/2697_access_for_all_efds_inclusive_communications_guide)

- EFDS Talk To Me Research

[http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/research/3253\\_talk\\_to\\_me\\_-\\_word\\_version](http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/research/3253_talk_to_me_-_word_version)

# Creating a Buddy System

A simple and very effective method of including a visually impaired participant into a sports and physical activity session and to increase communication is to develop a “buddy” system.

This involves identifying another participant in the group to support, help and guide the visually impaired participant. The role of “buddy” could consist of simply telling the VI person when to pass, or when to expect to receive the ball, explaining the next section of the session or guiding to the participant to appropriate place in the sports hall.

A buddy system ensures that a VI person is made to feel part of the group and isn't completely reliant on the coach or leader. This also allows the coach to focus on all participants. A buddy system also encourages communication, promotes social interaction and allows friendships to develop.

It is important, if possible, to ensure that the same individual is not always the buddy to the visually impaired participant. This is to prevent any resentment that an individual may feel. Another favourable outcome of the buddy system is that individuals who take on the responsibility of being a buddy can develop their own confidence and leadership.



# Guiding Visually Impaired People

A VI participant may require a sighted guide to assist them to and from your sports session. A VI participant may also require a sighted guide during the sports or activity session to either assist when changing drills or tasks, or for the complete sports activity (such as running).

## General Guiding

A VI participant may rely on a sighted person to assist them in accessing your sports facility. Not having access to a sighted guide may cause a barrier to participation.

One method of overcoming this barrier is to access the services of organisations such as Guide Dogs UK.

My Guide is a service provided by Guide Dogs to support people who are visually impaired to get out and about. The services matches people with sight loss with a trained volunteer who acts as a sighted guide and enables people to do the things they want to do, which can include taking part in sport and physical activity.

As well as providing sighted guides, Guide Dogs UK will also train people to become guides through the My Guide service. If there are a number of VI people accessing your session, club or facility consider providing this training to your staff, coaches and volunteers to break down the barriers experienced by VI people. For more information about the My Guide service visit [www.guidedogs.org.uk/services/my-guide](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/services/my-guide)

Below are some key points to consider when guiding a visually impaired person.

- Offer your elbow or shoulder to the VI person for them to take hold of. Ask them which side they prefer to be guided on. If guiding a child, they may want to hold your hand instead of your arm, or may just want to touch your arm. Ask them which technique they prefer.
  - Ensure you are always one step in front of the person that you are guiding, don't walk too fast or too slowly, ask if they are happy with the pace.
  - Communicate at all times e.g. steps (up or down), handrails. Describe what is around them and explain any changes in ground surface.
  - When guiding a VI person to a seat, place their hand on the back of the chair/bench. Do not back them into the seat.
  - When walking through doorways ensure that the VI person steps behind you and ensure that they do not get struck by the door or catch their fingers, etc.
  - Explain any loud noises.
  - Keep your guiding arm still and relaxed. Don't start waving it about or pointing at things.
  - Remember to give the person you are guiding adequate space around obstacles.
- Identify yourself and ask the VI person if they would like some assistance; don't just presume that they do or don't.

# During Sports Activities

The VI participant may require assistance during the session, especially when changing drills or sets and particularly when equipment is involved.

It is recommended that this person is not the lead coach but is an assistant coach, sports volunteer or support worker. As described earlier, a buddy system would be an excellent method of providing the necessary guiding support during sports activities.

## Sports that require a sighted guide

Some sports will require a sighted guide for the VI participant to fully participate, some popular examples include, Guide Running and Tandem Cycling.

Further information about Guide Running and How to Guide can be accessed in the VI Friendly Athletics Guide. Additionally British Blind Sport in partnership with England Athletics have developed a 'Sight Loss and Guide Running Workshop' which educates runners on how to be guides. For more information please contact British Blind Sport directly.



# Safety Considerations

There are some health and safety considerations that sports coaches/leaders and parents/carers may need to take into account when a VI person takes part in sport.

Health and Safety considerations should not be a barrier to including participants.

Specific risks should be considered as part of the usual risk assessment for the activity and action taken to minimise any potential risks as much as possible.

A template risk assessment form is available at [www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk)

## Obstacles

- A VI participant may not see obstacles and be unable to avoid them.
- Give detailed descriptions of the activity area and explain in advance any obstacles or hazards. Always let the VI participant know if they are to spend any period of time on their own.
- Use a guide if necessary.
- If there are other people using the activity area make other coaches/leaders and participants aware that there is a VI participant who may not see other participants or equipment.

## Fire Evacuation

- Make sure that there is a procedure in place to support a VI participant if they require it in a fire evacuation and that they know what it is, for example assigning a buddy or guide to provide assistance.

## Insurance

Ensure that all sports sessions have adequate insurance to protect you, your participants and your club. Having a VI participant within your session will not affect your insurance cover.

## Further Information

HSE – Health and Safety Executive  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/>



# Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

As a sport coach, leader or volunteer it is vitally important to prioritise safeguarding the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.

In this resource the term 'children' refers to children and young people under the age of 18.

Different Home Nations may have different legislations regarding the definition of a child, and vulnerable adults please refer to your National Sports Organisation for further information.

Anyone directly or indirectly involved with providing sport and physical activity opportunities have a responsibility to:

- Adhere to Code of Conduct / Code of Practice.
- Recognise signs of child abuse and understand the impact of abuse on children.
- Respond in an appropriate manner to children who may disclose that they are being abused.
- Know where to go for further information.
- Take appropriate action if concerns are raised.
- Ensure a clear process is in place for staff/volunteers to gain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Understand the need for photography and videography guidance.

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children. It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The equivalent body in Scotland is the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme .

DBS Checks are available free of charge for volunteers

## Further Information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

[www.disclosurescotland.co.uk](http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk)

Sport Coach UK offer a number of training courses and resource materials for sports people [www.sportcoachuk.org](http://www.sportcoachuk.org)

Child Protection in Sport Unit  
<https://thecpsu.org.uk/>

1st4sport  
[www.1st4sport.com](http://www.1st4sport.com)

National Society Prevention of Cruelty to Children  
[www.nspcc.com](http://www.nspcc.com)

Childline  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

# Pathways in Sport

Sport can provide many amazing opportunities for VI people. A number of sports offer exciting competition opportunities from local competitions through to international competitions such as the Paralympic Games.

As a sport coach/leader it is important to have an understanding of the landscape of sport and the competitive opportunities that may be available to a VI person.

## Inter-school - School Games

Often organised by the County Sports Partnership in England. VI children of school age will have the opportunity to be included in School Games. School Games is national initiative funded by Government and development by the Youth Sport Trust.

## Inter - club

Competitions are held between local clubs, which is often the first experience of competition for a participant. Having a low level competitive experience is incredibly value for any participant, it introduces rules, structure and officials. It also promotes and develops team cohesion and the values of winning and losing.

## County / Regional Competitions

Many sports will offer a County / Regional Competition Structure. Events for Visually Impaired Athletes will either be included in mainstream competitions, included as part of a pan disability competition or be a separate VI competition.

In some cases athletes may compete in a mainstream event without any adaptations or specific event for a visually impaired person. They would complete alongside mainstream peers.

County and Regional Competition structures are usually managed by the sports National Governing Body (NGB). As well as ensuring a player pathway an NGB has a role to increase participation, develop coaches and nurture and develop elite athletes to win medals on the international stage. Further information about the services of an NGB and the competition structures and player pathways can be found on the respective NGB websites.

## National Competitions

National competition is next step in the player pathway. Often athletes who access this level of competition are part of NGB World Class Programmes.

## World Class Programmes

Developed and funded by UK Sport, the World Class Programme covers all funded summer and winter Olympic and Paralympic sports. The programme operates at two levels:

- Podium - supporting athletes with realistic medal winning capabilities at the next Olympic/Paralympic Games (i.e. a maximum of four years away from the podium).
- Podium Potential – these are athletes whose performances suggest that they have realistic medal winning capabilities at the subsequent Olympic and Paralympic Games (i.e. a maximum of eight years away from the podium).

Further information about World Class Programmes can be obtained via the UK Sport website. [www.uk sport.gov.uk](http://www.uk sport.gov.uk)

## International Competitions

Elite competition can bring life changing experiences and opportunities including; employment, sponsorship, overseas travel and the opportunity to compete on the world stage. It is important as a coach to understand the potential and possibilities available for VI athletes.

## The Paralympic Games

Sport for people with disability has existed for over 100 years. In 1948 the first Games for Disabled was held at Stoke Mandeville Stadium. The official Paralympic Games took place in Rome, Italy in 1960. Great Britain has always had a record of performing exceptionally at Paralympic Games, in the London 2012 Paralympic Games 288 British athletes competed for ParalympicsGB and won a total of 120 medals, finishing in third place behind China and Russia.

## Other International and Professional Pathways

The Paralympic Games are not the only elite international competitions available to visually impaired athletes. Many sports do not have a paralympic pathway, but athletes do participate professionally and compete internationally. Cricket is an excellent example of a professional sport for the blind and visually impaired with an elite competition pathway.

# Case Study: Ed Hossell VI Cricket



**Name: Ed Hossell**  
**Classification: B3**

Ed became part of the National Visually Impaired Cricket programme during 2013 having progressed through the development leagues to become one of England's brightest prospects with the bat.

Ed has 6/60 vision in both eyes with full field of vision apart from a blind spot in the centre of

vision caused by Macular Degeneration.

"I was first introduced to cricket by my Dad then started playing at school at young age before I lost my sight. I then found about for visually impaired trials and sessions, and it was suggested that for serious competitive VI cricket that I join Somerset Visually Impaired County Cricket Club.

Cricket has always been my favourite sport and I enjoy the team atmosphere and competition. It is chance to push myself and improve. I have competed in the T20 Finals, the World Cup in South Africa and the International Test Series against India."



England VI Cricket Team 2015

# Classification

Classification is the grouping of athletes with equal impairment level to ensure a fair and even competition.

'It is a vital part all competitive pathways.

Success at competitions should be defined by an athlete's skill and ability, not their impairment. The sight classifications should give all athletes the confidence that they are competing against others equally. The classification process groups athletes with a similar level of visual impairment together.

## Categories of Classification

There are five main categories of classification that British Blind Sport records. An athlete's category will be based on the visual acuity or visual field of the eye with the most vision. All classification tests will be conducted with the corrective glasses or lenses worn by the athlete.

## Types of Classification Testing

There are two main types of classification testing; British Blind Sport's classification process and the International Blind Sports Federation's (IBSA) international classification testing.

## British Blind Sport's Classification

- British Blind Sport is the leading organisation in the UK for sight classifications.

Category	Acuity	Field
B1	No light perception up to and including the ability to recognise hand movements	Not applicable for the B1 category
B2	Ability to count fingers at any distance to an acuity of up to and including 2/60	5 degrees or less
B3	Above 2/60 up to and including 6/60	More than 5 degrees and less than 20 degrees
B4	Above 6/60 up to and including 6/24	Not applicable for the B4 category
B5	Above 6/24	Not applicable for the B5 category

Only B1, B2 and B3 domestic classification are recognised internationally and for major, domestic competitions. National governing

- This classification is relevant for people who want to compete in domestic or recreational competitions.
- An optometrist or ophthalmologist at a high street optician can complete a sight medical test form.
- Trained British Blind Sport classifiers interpret the medical test form and classify the athlete.
- These classifications are not valid for international competition.
- Visit the British Blind Sport website for more information: <http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk/classification>

## International Blind Sports Federation's Classification

- An optometrist or ophthalmologist completes a medical diagnostic form in the athlete's home country.
- Trained international classifiers interpret this form and classify the athlete.
- International classification can only happen at an IBSA-sanctioned event.
- These classifications can't be conducted outside of competition.
- Visit the IBSA website for more information: <http://www.ibsasport.org/classification>

bodies are responsible for deciding whether B4 and B5 players are eligible to compete in their competitions.

# Clean Sport

British Blind Sport and our sporting partners are committed to supporting and encouraging clean sport.

Doping in sport is a significant issue. Supporters and spectators question the honesty and ethics of the competition and may lose faith in the sport. Clean sport - free of doping - results in fair competition, with supports understanding that only the athlete's skill and ability is playing a role.

Along with affecting the integrity of competition, doping can have a significant impact on the health of athletes and can result in lasting health issues.

As a sport coach or leader it is important that you share the values of clean sport and promote these values to your participants and the parents of participants to increase awareness of the seriousness of doping in sport.

UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) is the National organisation dedicated to protecting a culture of clean sport.

The role of remit of UKAD includes:

- Raising awareness of the issues related to Anti-doping.
- Ensuring sports bodies are compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code.
- The prevention of doping in sport through education programmes.
- Intelligence-led athlete testing across more than 40 Olympic, Paralympic and Professional Sports.

## As a sport coach/leader you need to:

- Understand the role of UKAD and where to go to access further information.
- Develop a coaching environment that nurtures a culture of personal excellence, rather than win at all costs.

- Promote Clean Sport.
- Provide necessary information, timely and appropriate to the level of athlete that you are working with.

UKAD offer an extensive education programme for coaches, support staff, athletes and parents. Visit [www.ukad.org](http://www.ukad.org) for further information

## Reporting Doping

If you suspect doping in sport contact UKADs anonymous and confidential Reporting Doping in Sport Hotline 0800 032 2332.

## Further Reading

- Free Anti-Doping Advisor course, UK Anti-Doping - <http://www.ukad.org.uk/edn/about>
- Anti-doping newsletter, UK Anti-Doping - <http://www.ukad.org.uk/email-newsletter>
- World Anti-Doping Agency - <https://www.wada-ama.org>

# Adapting Sports for Visually Impaired People

Many sports are made accessible by making some simple and obvious changes to rules or modifications to playing area or adaptations to equipment. The information below provides some useful hints and tips to demonstrate how sport can be adapted.



**There are two adaptive formats of Football. Blind Football and Partially Sighted Football.**

**Each format is played with 5 players. Blind Football is played with an audible ball, partially sighted football with a futsal ball (size 4 football).**



**In swimming a tapper may be used to help inform a VI swimmer that they are nearing the wall. A tapper is a person using a lane cane with a small soft ball at the end, who taps the swimmers.**



**Guide runners support VI people in athletics events on the track and on the road.**

**In cycling VI people ride on tandem bikes and are supported by a 'stoker'.**



**For paratriathlon a sighted guide supports participants throughout the race.**

**Sighted guides are also used to assist and ensure safety of VI people in golf, tennis and target sports.**

**Court sizes are adapted in sports such as tennis, and boundaries are raised so that a VI person can feel with their feet the areas of the court.**

**Sports including tennis and golf, use a handicap system to ensure fair inclusion a VI person.**



Blindfolds are worn in  
**Blind Football**  
**Goalball**  
**Boccia**  
**Equestrian**

Blacked out goggles are used in **Swimming** for B1 classified swimmers.

**Many sports make use from the sense of touch and create tactile aids to support participants.**

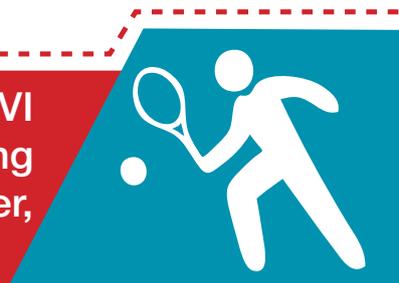
**In Sailing tactile maps are used to help VI people navigate. In Boccia a tactile board is used so that players are aware of the positioning of their ball on the court.**



In acoustic shooting sights are adapted, they collect and measure the level of light reflected from the target and convert it into sound. The centre of the target is white and the outward circles are increasingly darker grey. As the shooter approaches the white centre, more light is reflected into the sight and therefore a higher frequency sound is heard.

**For full information about adaptations, modification and sport specific rules please consult other British Blind Sport Educational Resources or contact British Blind Sport for advice and guidance.**  
[www.britishblindsport.org.uk](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk)

In tennis equipment is modified, the racket is shorter and in cricket the stumps are larger and usually painted white to aid VI people. Both sports have modifications in the rule regarding the number of bounces of the ball before reaching the player, and this varies depending on the sight classification.



# About

## About British Blind Sport

British Blind Sport helps blind and partially sighted people get active and play sport. Sport and recreational activities can enhance the lives of people with visual impairments, by improving their health and increasing their social interaction. We encourage adults and children to participate in activities at all levels from grassroots to the Paralympic Games.

British Blind Sport works across many areas to increase participation and ensure VI people have equal access and a high quality experience of sport. Key work areas include:

- Competitions and leagues.
- National events.
- Creating local opportunities in partnership with local sports deliverers.
- Educating clubs, coaches and facility providers.

## About Blind Children UK

Blind Children UK, formerly National Blind Children's Society, is a leading charity for children and young people with a vision impairment. Blind Children UK provide a range of services including:

- Family support; offering emotional and practical support and advice.
- Movement Matter; providing mobility and life skills training.
- Education Support; providing expert advice and support to ensure blind children are supported in school.
- Access Technology and Grants; providing advice on technology and sensory equipment.

## About Guide Dogs UK

Guide Dogs UK help people with sight loss enjoy the same freedom and independence as everyone else. Guide Dogs are best known for our guide dog service and have been expertly breeding and training guide dogs for more than 75 years. There are now over 4,900 guide dog partnerships in the UK. In addition, our buddy dogs are giving children and young people a vital boost in confidence. Furthermore, Guide Dogs UK campaigns alongside people with sight loss and other organisations for rights that most sighted people take for granted. Guide Dogs also fund and carry out research that aims to improve the lives of people with sight loss.

## About Scottish Disability Sport

Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) is the Scottish governing and co-coordinating sports body for people of all ages and abilities with a physical, sensory or learning disability. SDS has the vision of developing opportunities and improving performance in disability sport for children, athletes and players with a physical, sensory or learning disability

In Scotland, SDS has published a national strategy "Inspiring Through Inclusion", which will direct the work of the Association and build on the interest generated by both the London 2012 Paralympic Games and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. SDS lists its major partners as sportscotland, Scotland's Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Authorities plus National Disability Sports Organisations and Voluntary Organisations concerned with disability and sport.

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With over 2 million people living with sight loss in the UK, there is a need for specialised, accessible sporting provision.

In this guide, British Blind Sport will teach you the tools and techniques needed to reach visually impaired people and deliver accessible sporting opportunities.

You will learn how to:

- Use the correct terminology.
- Create accessible advertising literature for your sessions.
- Consider and resolve barriers to participation.
- Develop accessible and inclusive sporting sessions.
- Communicate with visually impaired people.

- Guide visually impaired people.
- Consider health and safety issues.
- Provide advice on competitive sporting opportunities.

British Blind Sport is the National Disability Sports Organisation for blind and partially sighted people in the UK. The charity has 40 years of experience developing sporting opportunities, classifying visually impaired athletes and sharing research about people with sight loss in sport and recreation.

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A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE THROUGH SPORT

**British Blind Sport is the leading voice for the blind and partially sighted community in sport and recreation in the United Kingdom.**

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