



Goalball **Visionaries**

Transforming People's Lives









Goalball UK

Introduction

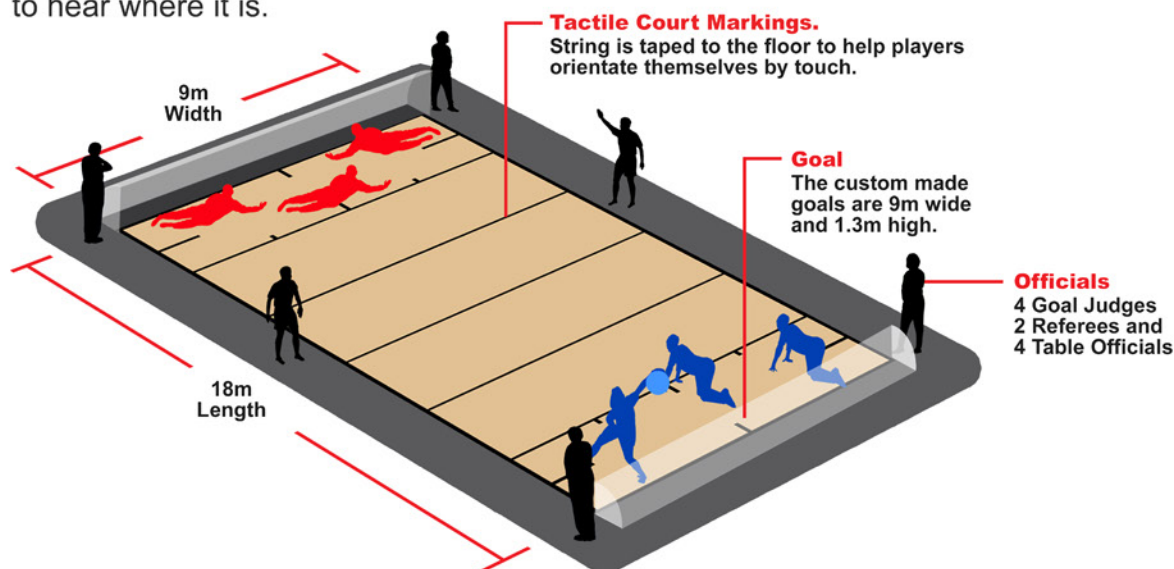


BY MARK WINDER
CEO OF GOALBALL UK

-  “Only 11% of people with a visual impairment (VI) participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity per week, compared with 39% of the general UK population. This is a situation that helps to perpetuate issues around physical and mental health, as well as social isolation.”
-  “For the last decade, the Goalball UK team have been working at the heart of the VI community, the largest cohort within the disability spectrum, to provide transformational opportunities to experience the challenge and joy of team-based sport. Whilst we strive to succeed as a nation on the world stage, for many of our players their ‘medals’ are won each day as they are increasingly able to live independent and confident lives.”
-  “Your support is crucial to bringing sport’s best kept secret to many of the underserved population of 2 million people in the UK who have a visual impairment. This report details just how much of an impact your generosity can have, which gives members of the blind and partially sighted community the opportunity to harness the power of this team sport.”
-  “If you want to have a conversation about how you can help and support Goalball UK, please find our contact details at the back of this report. We hope you enjoy learning more about this brilliant sport.”

Our Sport

Goalball is a sport **specifically designed** for blind and partially sighted people that is played by both children and adults. Everyone wears eye shades to play, regardless of their level of sight, to ensure an equal playing field. The indoor 18m by 9m court is tactile to enable the players to feel where they are and the ball is audible to enable the players to hear where it is.



The sport was created after World War II to assist the rehabilitation of injured soldiers and since 1976 has had global status as a **much-loved Paralympic sport** – it is the only team sport for visually impaired athletes in the 'Summer Games' that offers competitions for both male and female teams.


Whilst it is a 3-aside team game that fuses several sporting elements in to one, **it is not an adaptation of another established sport**. That independence means we can be focussed and nimble on behalf of our community, although we also have to work doubly hard to achieve the recognition and resources that a 'parent' National or International Governing Body might provide.


It is a very technical and tactical sport laced with strategies in deception; **a brilliant balance of silence and celebration** with a certain magic in how the players move so fluently despite not being able to see. An on-court human chess match where aerobic and anaerobic fitness is crucial, with a series of dynamic actions being repeatedly required during the 50-minute game. The power and accuracy of attack versus the speed and agility of defence, whilst maintaining mental focus and composure throughout in order to **make and execute decisions in a high-pressure situation**.




A Transformational Family


No matter who you speak to, they say that **the goalball community feels like a family**. It faces challenges, strives for recognition and provides a unique stage where VI people can demonstrate their athletic and sensory talents, that then **translate into a growing sense of personal independence and achievement in daily life**.

 **We enable introversion to be replaced by a desire and ability to engage** with their community and beyond - a powerful antidote at the best of times but especially so during Covid-19 which is creating sustained periods of social isolation for people with a disability.

 **Goalball enables our players to live independent lives**. For example, diary management and travelling on public transport to training and international competitions, whether alone or in a group, boosts confidence. Whilst 'sweeping' rather than 'pinpoint' techniques developed to find the ball also translate to and enhance the ability to locate domestic items at home. The net effect is that many previously protective families relax and embrace this newly acquired freedom.

 60% of goalball players are in full-time education, with research showing that VI people are **47% more likely to enter higher education and progress further in life** if they have played goalball. Whilst a significant number of our players mirror the wider VI community, where rates of unemployment can be as high as 75% and over 40% are classified as NEETS, our elite level teams also feature a doctor, teacher, city trader and a recent accountancy graduate of Oxford University, for example. Diversity is at the heart of our community.

 The format of **the sport also enables community cohesion with sighted people able to be part of training and competition**. Siblings, partners, parents and friends can provide practical and emotional support simply by wearing eye shades, allowing them to truly appreciate the unique challenges faced by the players.

 We have a decade of anecdotal evidence of the **profound impact** goalball has on the lives of our players and their families, and now we have the systematic research to prove this. According to independent analysis conducted by York St John University in 2020, we deliver a truly impressive **Social Return on Investment of £4.31 for each £1 invested**.

And for some, the game also allows them to explore and develop their other perceived limitations:

"I relished the fact that for once my sight perception wasn't my issue in this sporting arena. Being 40, slightly overweight and not especially good at sport was!"

Dyfrig Lewis-Smith, Goalball UK Board Member and Grassroots Player

"I love that goalball is accessible not just to the VI community, but sighted family and friends can play alongside or get involved as a coach, official or volunteer - like I have. I started refereeing a few months after Dyfrig joined the Cambridge Dons, and I really enjoyed spending Sunday afternoon whistling games for the juniors, and the adult teams. Getting involved with goalball has given us a community of visually impaired friends who, for example, we can compare notes with on technology and transport, and other opportunities we know about. And for me, a community of officials who are great fun to work alongside."

Rev. Frin Lewis-Smith, Goalball Referee

"I have seen some of our athletes who have recently lost their sight go from having no idea of how to be blind, to within 12 months eating with etiquette and doing all of the tasks that their mum used to do! Goalball provides a special philosophy on life and a support network to help navigate people through some of the toughest periods in their life."

Faye Dale, National Talent Lead

Sound Support

Goalball is sometimes described as **sport's best kept secret**. This is a label that, with your help, we would like to shed; not out of a sense of frustration or lack of appreciation, but because we believe that our community is at a natural stage where it is ready and needs to grow.

We combine **elite level Paralympic sport**, featuring a desire to succeed on the global stage, with a truly inclusive option for those who are often excluded from physical activity and being in a team at school or recreationally.


Goalball UK is a registered charity based in Sheffield and was formed in 2010. We now have an executive staff of 8, a frugal budget and much of our energy and capacity comes through an extraordinary support network, meaning that there are often more coaches, officials and volunteers at a tournament than there are players on-court. And whilst every sport has its 'critics corner', our canine version is somewhat special and unique!


We enjoy the enthusiastic financial support of Sport England in relation to growing the grassroots and club base of the sport, however our national teams and talent ID programmes receive minimal support from UK Sport. We remain committed in addressing the undoubted but bridgeable gap to international elite level performance and qualification for future Paralympic Games.

However, this endorsement and support will only get us so far and there are many in the VI community across the UK who simply have not had the opportunity to experience the power of goalball. The continued expansion and professional delivery of the sport, whilst retaining its core values, is crucial in the next period and we want this to firmly include all of the Home Nations.

Our Strategic Goals

Only 11% of VI people participate in 30 minutes of physical activity per week, compared to 19% of all disabled people and 39% of non-disabled people. Our obsession as an organisation is to combat this through providing **truly inclusive sport and exercise and a transformational platform for personal development** to as many VI people as possible. Our Strategic plan features the following:

 **Raising Awareness:** We know we will have absolutely succeeded with a range of interventions and campaigning when we almost never have to explain what goalball is or just how marginalised the VI community is when it comes to sport! We will achieve this via innovative media partnerships and direct campaigning, as well as capitalising on the **2023 IBSA World Games in Birmingham** where goalball will be one of nine featured sports and it will act as a qualifying event for the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris.

 **Increasing Participation:** In 2020 we have approximately 800 registered players. Our goal is for this figure to be at least 1,500 by the end of the decade. To achieve this, we need to:

Extend the local reach of each of our current 35 clubs that are largely in England, connecting to schools where possible.

Double the size of the club network by establishing at least 35 new clubs/hubs, especially in the other Home Nations where we have so far only had very limited funding to operate. Each club costs approximately £5,000 per annum to establish/sustain.


Appoint four more Club Development Officers who can provide that start up resource and expertise. Annual funding of £35,000 is required for each officer.

Target groups within the VI community, including Southeast Asian families and women and girls, where participation has been unrepresentative of the population.



Recruit more officials and volunteers. An elite level game requires ten officials in various roles and our grassroots programmes rely on volunteers. As we grow, we need to ensure our ratios are maintained and the quality and knowledge of our facilitators rises too, including at the international level.

Increasing the number of opportunities, for instance expanding the National League to provide more frequent and local opportunities for all ability levels.


 **Establishing a World-Class High-Performance Programme:** Our talent ID pathway is only five years old, but already we have some athletes emerging with world-class potential and provides hope for Paris 2024 qualification and beyond. We must not choke this pipeline, especially amongst 12-16-year olds, through a lack of finance.


We instead want to:


Appoint a Performance Pathway Lead to provide enhanced structure on our performance journey and to support our coaching network.

Ensure that some of our key staff work on an almost full-time basis.

Secure £250k per team per annum. Whilst our national men's and women's teams are amongst the top 25% in the world, they are often competing against state-funded nations who financially support their players.

 **Establishment of a National Centre:** On almost every occasion, our training sessions and tournaments require the erection of portable goals and the taping of courts in hired halls. We have the opportunity to build a dedicated centre on a four-acre site at York St John University. However, before embarking on such a significant development we need to be able to fund a £15,000 feasibility study.


 **A Commitment to Player Welfare:** As one of our players has said, "If one of us is hurt, we all hurt." Looking after our community is crucial as is necessary at a number of levels. Sports science needs to become a bigger part of our provision as the sport develops, including the research into, and prevention of, wrist injuries that are especially prevalent for our athletes.

 **Build our Goalball UK Infrastructure:** Ensuring that all of our communication channels are class-leading in terms of accessibility for the VI community and wider disability spectrum, and that our CRM, player registration and membership systems enable the projected growth in our sport. And given the enormous jolt that Covid-19 has presented for sports organisations, we need to build a greater financial resilience as our reserves are minimal.


Goalball Visionaries

Philanthropy and grants based on the clear social impact that we deliver as a sport have featured in our history to date and we are working tirelessly to attract a new cohort of Goalball Visionaries. We would be honoured and grateful if you elected to be one.

As a Goalball Visionary you will not only be contributing to the growth of the sport and the lives we influence, but we will strive to:

 **Recognise your support via appropriate naming opportunities** – i.e. programmes, scholarships, teams, leagues, facilities etc. – and in our Annual Report and website. Or indeed we will gladly respect your desire for anonymity. Corporate supporters can also benefit through local and national PR activity.

 **Connect you with the sport and our community** via regular communication from the leadership team of Goalball UK and the athletes themselves, together with invitations to tournaments and events, including the 2023 IBSA World Games in Birmingham, so that you can experience the special dynamics of our sport.

 **Provide you with a real sense of connection to, and partnership with**, the wider Paralympic and Blind Sports Movement, both in the UK and internationally; especially as we move towards the 2023 IBSA World Games in Birmingham, prior to the 2024 Paralympic Games in Paris.

For companies and organisations, we can also offer a unique way to experience goalball as part of a team building day/event. Working together to erect the 9m-long goals, mark out the tactile court, navigate space with a blindfold and to then operate as a team to play the game is a profound challenge for any group of individuals, and we know this positively influences workplace dynamics and relationships. Meeting inspiring GB squad athletes also generates new perspectives around adversity and adaptation.

“Being a long-term donor to goalball has provided me with huge satisfaction and a series of memories that I will cherish. It has been terrific to get to know the players and their families and I certainly didn’t anticipate being invited to join one of the national teams during their downtime at a major international tournament in Stockholm, and witness them landing triple 20s as part of a competitive game of darts!”

Sir Nigel Bogle

Founding Partner, Bartle Bogle Hegarty.





How Can You Help?

As a registered charity we are dependent on donations and grants.
Below is an example of what it costs us to transform more lives:

- **£250,000** to help propel one of our national teams towards Paralympic Games qualification.
- **£35,000** to appoint a Club Development Officer in each Home Nation each year.
- **£20,000** to operate a National League each year.
- **£15,000** would fund a feasibility study for a new National Goalball Centre.
- **£6,000** per year to fund a utility vehicle for transportation plus 7-seater SUV.
- **£5,000** to enable a Club to be established and to operate per year.
- **£2,500** for a set of goals.
- **£500** to develop a qualified Club Head Coach.
- **£250** to develop a qualified Club Assistant Coach.
- **£50** for a goalball.
- **£35** for a set of eye shades.
- **£25** for a set of pads (knee, elbow and hip).

To discuss how you may wish to partner with us please don't hesitate to get in touch:

Mark Winder

(Secretary General/Chief Executive Officer)

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