

Paralympics Fact File

All About Goalball

What is Goalball?

Goalball is a sport for athletes with a visual impairment.

The aim of goalball is to throw the ball into the opposing team's net while defenders try to block the ball with their bodies.

The ball used in goalball has bells inside so that the athletes can locate where the ball is. The ball is the size of a basketball but twice the weight.

The indoor court is the size of a volleyball court; it has 'tactile' lines, which can be felt so players can find their position on the court. There are goals at either end of the court that are 9 metres wide and 1.3 metres high.

There is no central net on the court.

Athletes wear a blackout mask whilst in play.

The Rules

- Each goalball team has 6 players, no more than 3 players from each side are allowed on the pitch at any one time.
- Matches consist of two 10-minute halves.
- The goalball arena has to be silent during play so that athletes can hear the ball.
- If the match ends in a draw, then extra time is given. Two halves of three extra minutes are added, but the game is ended if a goal is scored within the period.
- If the game is still a draw after extra time, extra throws (the goalball equivalent of a penalty shootout) are played.



Facts About Goalball:

- Top goalball players throw the ball at speeds of around 60mph (miles per hour).
- Goalball was originally developed to support war veterans, who returned from the Second World War with visual impairments.
- Goalball was first introduced in 1976 at the Toronto Paralympic Games.
- In Rio 2016, Lithuania won the Men's competition, while the women's team from Turkey took the gold.