



Goalball UK

Goalball UK Annual Report 2023



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Introduction from the Chair

Dear Members, Supporters, and Friends of Goalball UK,

It is with great pride that I present to you the Goalball UK Impact Report for 2023. This document not only celebrates our achievements over the past year but also reflects on the spirit and passion of our community. In a year marked by challenges and triumphs, Goalball UK has continued to evolve, not just as a sport but as a community that empowers, includes, and inspires.

Our journey through 2023 has been about steady growth, enhanced community engagement, and success on both national and international stages. These milestones are not just numbers and accolades; they represent the real and positive impact of goalball on the lives of blind and partially sighted people. Each statistic in this report is a story of determination and resilience.

The IBSA World Games 2023 was the first major international goalball event in the UK since the London Paralympics in 2012. During this event, and in the run up, we have seen remarkable examples of leadership, teamwork, and individual excellence. Our athletes, coaches, and volunteers demonstrated exceptional dedication and skill, bringing professionalism and recognition to our sport. Their stories are a testament to the power of sport in transforming lives and building communities. As we celebrate these achievements, we also recognise the challenges that lie ahead and the work that remains to be done.

Looking forward, we remain committed to our mission of making goalball accessible to all, boosting opportunities at the grassroots level, and pursuing excellence at the highest echelons of competition. We are grateful for the support of our members, partners, and sponsors, whose contributions have been instrumental in our success.

Together, we are ready to embark on another year of growth, learning, and achievement, united by our love for goalball and our belief in its power to change lives.

John Grosvenor, Chair, Goalball UK

CEO Statement

Reflecting on a Year of Impact and Progress

As we navigate towards our 2024-2029 strategic plan, I am pleased to share the remarkable strides Goalball UK has made in the last calendar year (2023).

Key Highlights:

The end of the year, after 14 months and 6 major competitions, saw both our GB teams, retain their status in the European A group for the first time - in the most challenging regional international competition in the world.

Our domestic opportunities continue to grow. We saw our membership grow by 18%, we continue to provide opportunities to people who are blind or partially sighted.

Several new clubs have been established or are in the process of doing so, providing more localised opportunities.

Goalball and Goalball UK played a significant role in the IBSA World Games in Birmingham, which saw 10 sports represented and over 1,500 athletes participating from across the world.



The things which continue to give me energy and enthusiasm are the personal stories I hear nearly every day of how goalball in many different guises has helped people. Whether it be through their physical health, mental health, confidence, independence, or providing a solution to anxiety or isolation. We must remember the benefits to our sport do not end in the sports hall.

However, it remains we still have a journey to follow. Are we perfect? No. Are we improving? Absolutely! Can we do it on our own? Absolutely not.

Our journey is powered by our community of clubs, players, volunteers, staff, and supporters. Your enthusiasm and dedication are at the heart of our success.

As we look forward, we remain committed to developing our people and sport, ensuring that goalball continues to be a beacon of what's possible in an inclusive world.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

Mark Winder, CEO, Goalball UK

Annual Survey

The results of our recent members survey revealed over 87% of our members are satisfied or more with the services Goalball UK provides. These include competitions, support, communication, and safety.

The survey also revealed a strong interest towards the development of team support and coaching opportunities which will be explored and developed alongside our members at their annual conference being held in late Summer 2024.

Social media, our monthly E-News and the website provided the main source of effective accessible communication for our members.

Goalball UK is driven by its passion for providing fully accessible experiences for its members in an inclusive world. Our annual survey is just one of the ways we can listen to our member's voices and act on them. As we launch our new strategy focussed on our community, we will only get better and stronger at this.



87%

Comments from our community

“They provide a safe space for our users to compete at levels they wouldn't be able to do in other sports”

“I want to support my son to be the best that he can be and help strengthen and inspire our team as well as support the precious goalball community in any way possible.”

“I had never played goalball until I applied and joined the #FindTheNext Goalball Academy, which has been amazing in so many ways. Introducing me to goalball and learning new skills, working on improving my independence, making new friends and playing at competitions.”



High Performance

2023 was a busy year for our high-performance programme, marked by two qualifiers for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

We hosted 20 training camps, participated in three international competitions, and organised an international training camp. Additionally, the ongoing participation of the Super League club team, 'Queen Bees,' has significantly enhanced the GBR Women's programme, boosting player and team development in a competitive domestic setting.

In 2023, we welcomed new members to our team, including Chief Medical Officer Dr. Alaina Hadfield, enhancing our medical support alongside physiotherapists and contributing to concussion protocol delivery.



The women's programme saw the addition of Lawrence Mayhew (Physiotherapist) and Dan Martin (Sports Psychologist), while the men's programme welcomed Kieran Burke (Physical Preparation) and Gareth Lewis (Performance Psychologist). Talent programme physiotherapists Tom Andrews, Mollie Hughes, and Ellie Cook-Smith advanced to senior roles, notably aiding our European Championships campaign. We're thankful for everyone's dedication.

We bid farewell to key staff, including Alex Bunney, who, after over nine years, departed as the GBR Men's team Assistant Coach. His contributions, especially in maintaining our European A Championships status, have been invaluable, and although he'll be missed, we're glad to keep his expertise in a broader coaching role. Additionally, lead physiotherapist Josie Hewson and nutritionist Jodie Redgrave have left the programme, and we are thankful for their long-term support, wishing them well in their future endeavours.





High Performance

IBSA World Games

The IBSA World Games were held on home soil, making the event even more significant for everyone involved. Both our men's and women's teams had the opportunity to compete against the best teams in the World, producing some memorable performances in front of family and friends. Finishing positions:

- GBR Women 7th place
- GBR Men 13th place



IBSA European Championships

At the European A Championships in Podgorica, Montenegro, in December 2023, both our teams competed with notable performances. The Women's team, in strong form and eyeing Paris 2024 qualification, secured second in their group behind Turkey, and after a victory over Finland, faced a semi-final defeat to Israel. They narrowly missed a bronze against Greece, finishing just outside the podium.

The Men's team, having been promoted to Europe's top division in November 2022, aimed to retain their status. They won two of four group matches and faced Turkey in the quarter-finals but were defeated. They successfully secured their place in the European A division after a decisive 5-3 win against Greece in a crucial match, marking their continued presence in the division for the first time since 1999. Finishing positions:

- GBR Women 4th place
- GBR Men 7th place

Our Paris 2024 cycle came to an end with neither team qualifying for the Paralympic Games. However, progress has been made and we now have two teams competing at European A Championships level. This puts us in a good position heading into the LA 2028 cycle.

Talent and Academy



"We are incredibly proud of everyone in talent at this stage of the pathway, with the future generation of upcoming athletes looking bright!"

Faye Dale, National Talent Lead



Talent sits as an integral part of the Goalball UK Performance Pathway.

Players and staff within this programme are developing themselves through learning and experiences to best prepare them for transition into the senior Great Britain squads.

During 2023 our talent and academy squads have gone from strength to strength. The Talent squad has had six training camps and one international tournament resulting in a well-deserved silver medal. The Academy Squad has had four training camps and is now fully recognised as an official programme in Goalball UK's Performance Pathway.

The Programme



The squads comprise of 24 players aged from 13 to 24 years old. Each year players are reviewed, and a development plan put in place to assess their readiness to progress to the next squad.

Currently four Academy players are attending Talent Squad training opportunities and seven Talent Squad players have attended Great Britain Senior training development opportunities.

We are incredibly proud of everyone in talent at this stage of the pathway, with the future generation of upcoming athletes looking bright.

Coach and staff development has been at the forefront of 2023 with the recruitment of a new head coach and assistant coach to work with the Talent Squad players.

Recognising the talent within we have designed and piloted a new Young Coaches Scheme. Currently four young people are working to develop their coaching and leadership skills at the Academy Squad training camps. More opportunities to get involved in coaching will be announced in 2024.

goalballuk.com/gb-squads/talent

Children and Young People



Goalball UK's Schools programme continues to go from strength-to-strength, promoting goalball as an inclusive sport to both sighted and blind or partially sighted pupils. In 2023 we worked with 28 schools, introducing over 1,787 students to goalball. This included 119 blind or partially sighted pupils.



A new partnership with PE Office has been established to redevelop our secondary school resources, launching in March 2024. We hope the new offer will raise awareness of and increase the ongoing delivery of goalball in schools.

The Youth Forum held mini fundraising events at tournaments including bake sales and raffles leading up to their first fundraising event 'Climb Snowden' which raised over £3,000. These funds will be used by the Youth Forum to organise the 2024 Summer Camp.

In partnership with Guide Dogs (Southampton, Devon & Cornwall, and Bristol teams), local sight loss societies – Berkshire Vision, Sight for Surrey, and Oxfordshire Eyes, and British Blind Sport we also delivered several opportunities for children and young people to try goalball at their events.



Clubs

Our network of affiliated goalball clubs expanded in 2023 with four new clubs launched in Bradford, Oxford, Watford, and Staffordshire.

Our staff have been on hand throughout the year to support existing clubs to develop in key areas of governance, safeguarding, funding, and workforce development.

"We would like to thank all our clubs for their hard work throughout the year in delivering goalball in their local communities. In 2024 we will focus on improving our club support offer as we recognise the challenges clubs face in setting up and sustaining."

Alex Bunney, Participation Lead



Competition

Our officials, activators, and event staff have delivered 31 regional, intermediate, and national competition days with over 230 players taking part. Our competitions continue to be a great opportunity for players, coaches, and officials to come together and share their passion for the sport on and off the court.

In June 2023 we delivered our flagship event, the Goalfix Cup, at Worcester University piloting a 3-day format for the first time. The event was live streamed with audio description commentary available in venue and on the live stream.

As we look ahead our priority is to increase and further upskill our workforce to sustain and grow our competition offer for 2024 and beyond.



Taster sessions and Awareness days

Our partnership work with British Blind Sport (BBS) delivers practical goalball taster sessions and awareness raising activities across the UK.

As well as BBS events, we represent at QAC Sight Village events, the Albinism Fellowship Family Conference, Help for Heroes, Sight Loss Council's 'Let's Get Active' Day and various sport festivals around the country.

Goalball UK, in partnership with our affiliated clubs, also offer taster sessions throughout the year.

The IBSA World Games offered the opportunity to make the most of the wide exposure of goalball with our World Games Grant Scheme funding 15 extra taster sessions to introduce new people to the sport.





Workforce and Volunteers

The work of Goalball UK would not be possible without the team of dedicated, enthusiastic and skilled volunteers who make up a myriad of roles to form our Workforce.

From 14 to 81 years old, the people supporting goalball come from all walks of life.

In 2023 our Workforce grew by almost 100%!

- 28 new volunteer Activators joined our 26 existing Activators
- 6 newly qualified referees now join our group of 20 qualified goalball referees
- We provided 28 volunteers to the IBSA World Games who took on official roles such as table and goal judging

In 2023, working with eight universities, volunteering has boosted the number of individuals joining the goalball community.

We have represented at various university volunteer fairs such as Sheffield Hallam University, University of Sheffield, University of Birmingham, Birmingham City University, York St John University, University of Worcester, Bishop Grosseteste University and the University of East London.

Partnerships

As part of our Obsessions to grow the sport of goalball and raise awareness, 2023 was the first year Goalball UK have employed a Fundraising lead. This has already allowed us to develop new partnerships, helping to provide more opportunities for people who are blind or partially sighted. This area of work is a key function in developing the long-term sustainability of our charity.

Since 2017 we have generated income from a variety of sources, and it has allowed us to develop many new projects. The new appointment has allowed us to think about how we can do this in an increased, sustained, strategic and measured way.

We will shortly finalise Goalball UK's 2024 -2027 fundraising strategy. This will set out ambitions to grow fundraising as an income stream within the organisation. We will bring the goalball community on the journey by introducing activities which will drive the diversification of current income.

Over the year we have tried a variety of ways to develop and understand our fundraising strengths and areas for development. This has allowed us to define where we focus our energy in the coming years.

We have established commercial partnerships with several companies to support our work. Namely, Northern Accountants, PE Office, Direct Business Solutions, Sol PV and Perfection Travel. All these companies are working with us to support our cause and became shirt sponsors for our Great Britain teams. This is the first time Goalball UK have attracted sponsorship of this kind. Goalfix Sports continue to be headline sponsors for the Goalfix Cup and the partnerships continues to flourish.



Partnerships cont.

Pilot Projects throughout the year included time spent working with our community. We worked with the GB Squad to identify costs they personally incur and provide them with templates and localised funding that could support them.

We have identified this work needs to be replicated with clubs. 2024 will see us focus on supporting clubs substantially.

In 2023 we became charity partners in the London Landmarks Half Marathon with an amazing team of 5 runners raising awareness in our branded kit and cheer points. This brought us a modest income of £4K. We learned a lot from our inaugural efforts and aim to grow this an income stream over the coming years.

We launched the 'Get Behind GB' campaign to raise awareness of the IBSA World Games and support the Great Britain teams participating. This campaign had limited success and led to vital learnings. If we want to develop crowdfunding as a source of funding, we must grow our reach beyond the present goalball community.

In partnership with British Blind Sport, we hosted existing and new partners at the IBSA World Games in Coventry. This allowed us to showcase the sport and our people in a positive fashion and allowed us to enter several new conversations about partnerships.

After several pilot projects, we have established Trusts and Foundations are key to increasing our income streams. Based on 2022, we returned an increase of 71% in small grants from other charities and over 50% from those supporting us for the very first time. Our Fundraising Lead will drive these efforts with the recruitment of volunteers to support this area of work. Alongside this we must develop relationships with corporate partners and both areas of work will be our focus moving forward, whilst developing the reach of our sport and organisation across the UK.



Thank you

Thank you to all our supporters, funders, partners, and fundraisers. Our work would not be possible without the support of so many individuals, organisations and businesses.

In particular we would like to thank:

- Sport England
- National Lottery
- UK Sport
- Boost Charitable Trust
- The Spectacle Makers’ Charity
- Goalfix Sports Ltd
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Perfection Travel and Events Ltd
- Direct Business Group
- PE Office
- Sol PV Group
- Northern Accountants Ltd
- The Edward Gostling Foundation
- UKH Foundation
- SYCF – South Yorkshire Community Foundation
- Will Charitable Trust
- Boshier-Hinton Foundation
- British Blind Sport
- IBSA
- SportsAid
- TASS
- Paralympics GB
- UKAD
- CAST
- Our volunteers
- Our clubs
- Our players
- Our supporters
- Trusts and foundations
- The staff at Goalball UK
- The Board of Trustees and Directors





Your support is crucial

Did you know only 11% of people with a visual impairment participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity per week, compared with 39% of the general UK population?

This is a situation that perpetuates issues around physical and mental health and social isolation.

For over ten years, Goalball UK has worked at the heart of this community, the largest cohort within the disability spectrum to provide transformational opportunities.

Whilst we strive to succeed as a nation on the world stage, for many of our players and athletes their medals are won each day through living more independent and confident lives.

We'd like to ask you to consider becoming a Goalball Visionary to transform the lives of blind and partially sighted people through goalball.

Your support is crucial to bringing sport's best kept secret to many of the underserved population of 2 million people in the UK with total or partial sight loss.

Whether you are an individual supporter, a foundation or a company, please join our family of Goalball Visionaries and donate your money, time and support in a variety of ways.

To find out more please visit goalballuk.com/support-us. Or email mark.winder@goalballuk.com



Our Contact

Please do contact us if you have any questions. Our details are below:



Phone : 0114 2235670



Address :

EIS Sheffield, Coleridge Road,
Sheffield, S9 5DA



Website :

goalballuk.com

Supporting information

[GBUK Financial Accounts 2022-23](#)

[About Us](#)

[Meet the Team](#)

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Credits

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Pages 2, 4, 5 and 13 Richard Hall

Page 14 Their Royal Highnesses The Prince and Princess of Wales credit Kensington Palace/SportsAid



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