



HENBURY BOCCIA CLUB

The boccia club is a community club which runs every Friday at Henbury Leisure Centre 7-8pm to enable disabled people of all ages and abilities to socialise, develop skills and play sport. It is a ground breaking club, the only grassroots club for all ages and abilities in Bristol.



Why is this important?

Boccia is totally inclusive and can be played by anyone regardless of age, gender, disability or ability. It is a target game where precision and accuracy are more important than physical strength. It is easy to learn and can be played competitively within minutes of learning. It empowers participants to make decisions whilst the tactical nature of the game means individuals work closely as a team.

Despite evidence that boccia can help improve movement skills (which enhances function ability), builds confidence (by giving players belief in their own potential) and produces meaningful improvements in a player's physical capabilities, there is limited provision for disabled people in Bristol. Helping to enhance tactical skills (which develops decision making), the club is also somewhere to meet friends, improving physical and mental wellbeing, which positively impacts the individuals and in turn society and the tax payer.

The story so far...

Access Sport participated in a parent carer consultation looking at sport for young disabled people in the city. One sport highlighted for its accessibility but lack of current provision was boccia. In phase one of the Ignite Programme, Access Sport supported clubs to deliver outreach sessions and tasters at events. Delivering in many local colleges, organisations and community groups, people who did not participate in sport or activity or felt they were unable to due to their disability, could engage and have a positive experience in sport. By gaining confidence through playing in a safe and fun environment has then led to being signposted to the club, where participants can play regularly.

Access Sport has helped create accessible, low cost club sessions, engaging volunteers from schools, colleges, universities and corporate settings, helping to make the club sustainable.

Access Sport has also provided coach support and training (including three boccia leaders courses (training over 60 new coaches across the region), an officiating course and opportunity to attend a national training conference). The charity has also helped fund important adapted equipment such as ramps to enable those with very limited mobility to play. The club leader has been recognised for her commitment through three awards including 'Young Volunteer of the Year' and the club also featured on Made in Bristol TV. Access Sport has also helped implement regional and national competition opportunities to provide participants with competitive pathways to develop their skills and a chance to play against other teams. Links with Irwin Mitchell has provided sponsorship for each player to have a hoodie to compete in and volunteer engagement from their employees to help sustain club sessions.

Club numbers

- ✓ 9 regularly attending more than 25 weekly sessions. Ages 15- 51 years
- ✓ 62% of regular participants aged 16 – 24 years
- ✓ 62% also regularly attend another Ignite club setting
- ✓ 95 young people engaged in outreach sessions 7-25 years old
- ✓ 1067 total throughput of participants attending
- ✓ 5 coaches and over 10 volunteers, 3 who are under 25, lead coach aged 18, 2 disabled volunteers



Club feedback

'Every week with practice I am getting better and enjoying being part of a team.'

'It works for me because I feel part of a team and comfortable about myself. Being deaf, not all places have made me welcome.'

'I like playing boccia. It's a sport I can do. It's a clever game. It's in Bristol. I couldn't play except in school because the only club was too far. Got something good to do on Fridays now.'

'My game is improving now I can practice more. Mum got me a proper ramp because I play regularly now.'

