

Experience Goalball – The Series

Goalball is a fast-moving game for blind and visually impaired athletes- but you can try it at home, school or office, and outdoors!

(by Paul Jurbala)

Some simple rules and tips:

- You need players, usually one per side, or up to three per side for a gym or outdoor game, and a referee. The referee's job is to start and stop play and to let you know when you score a goal!
- All players wear a blindfold, except when playing outdoors.
- The object is to score by rolling your ball into the opponent's goal...the opponent tries to stop your shot, and then will try to score on your goal.
- You need to hear the ball. A regulation goalball is made of rubber and has a bell inside to create a sound for the players to hear. For your game, pick a ball which makes a sound on your playing surface. For example, a table tennis ball makes a sound rolling on a desk, and a plastic "wiffle" ball makes a sound on a hard floor. Don't use a very hard or heavy ball or throw it in a way that could cause damage or injury.
- Roll the ball. It may bounce, but do not throw it directly at your opponent's goal area.

1. At school or in the office:

- Desktop goal ball:
 - Each player uses a book for their goal. Goals are spaced about 1 metre apart on a table or desk.
 - Use a table tennis ball.
 - The first player orients her/himself using her/his goal, then when the referee says "play", bounces or rolls the ball toward the opponent's goal.
 - The defender has to listen for the ball and try to block it with a flattened hand. The defender can only block the goal with the width of their hand...not by using two hands or an arm to block the whole goal.
 - Strategy: before shooting, try moving the ball left and right on the table (making a sound)...try bouncing the ball so it only bounces once. That makes it harder for the defender to hear the path of the ball, but also makes it harder to make an accurate shot.
 - Take turns...first player to five goals wins! Let the referee have a turn playing the next game.
- Hallway goal ball:
 - Find an open empty space where you will not be obstructing others! A smooth, tiled floor is perfect.
 - Each player makes a goal about 1 m wide. A rolled-up jacket or something soft works well. Goals are spaced about 3 metres apart.
 - Use a wiffle ball (plastic ball about 5 cm in diameter).
 - Players are blindfolded and play on their knees. They can slide from side to side on the floor.
 - The first player orients her/himself using her/his goal, then when the referee says "play", bounces or rolls the ball toward the opponent's goal.
 - The defender has to listen for the ball and try to block it. The defender can only block the

goal from their knees...not by lying across the whole goal.

- Strategy: before shooting, try moving the ball left and right so it makes a sound...try bouncing the ball so it only bounces once. That makes it harder for the defender to hear the path of the ball, but also makes it harder to make an accurate shot.
- Take turns...first player to five goals wins! Let the referee have a turn playing the next game.

A few more people:

- If you have four players, you can play two a side.
- Communication is key- call for a pass, let your team-mates know where you are! (However, you can't distract the other team by shouting all the time.)

2. At home:

• Dinner table goal ball:

- Each player uses a book for their goal. Goals are spaced about 1 metre apart on the table.
- Use a table tennis ball, or a small (2 cm) ball of aluminum foil.
- The first player orients her/himself using her/his goal, then when the referee says "play", bounces or rolls the ball toward the opponent's goal.
- The defender has to listen for the ball and try to block it with a flattened hand. The defender can only block the goal with the width of their hand...not by using two hands or an arm to block the whole goal.
- Strategy: before shooting, try moving the ball left and right on the table (making a sound)...try bouncing the ball so it only bounces once. That makes it harder for the defender to hear the path of the ball, but also makes it harder to make an accurate shot.
- Take turns...first player to five goals wins! Let the referee have a turn playing the next game.

• Rec room goal ball:

- Find an open empty space where you will not be knocking over the furniture! A smooth, tiled floor is perfect, but a smooth carpeted floor also works.
- Each player makes a goal about a half-metre wide. A rolled-up jacket or something soft works well. Goals are spaced about 2-3 metres apart.
- Use a wiffle ball (plastic ball about 5 cm in diameter). On a tiled or wood floor you will be able to hear the ball. On carpet, the referee needs to help the defender by calling "left" or "right" so the defender can move toward the ball.
- Players are blindfolded and play on their knees. They can slide from side to side on the floor.
- The first player orients her/himself using her/his goal, then when the referee says "play", bounces or rolls the ball toward the opponent's goal.
- The defender has to listen for the ball and try to block it. The defender can only block the goal from their knees...not by lying across the whole goal.
- Strategy: before shooting, try moving the ball left and right so it makes a sound...try bouncing the ball so it only bounces once. That makes it harder for the defender to hear the path of the ball, but also makes it harder to make an accurate shot.
- Take turns...first player to five goals wins! Let the referee have a turn playing the next game.

A few more people:

- If you have four players, you can play two a side.
- Communication is key- call for a pass, let your team-mates know where you are! (However, you can't distract the other team by shouting all the time.)

3. Outdoors:

- Tennis court goal ball:
 - Find an open empty space with a hard, smooth playing surface. Part of a tennis court or other paved space works. Make sure the area is safe, without people, cars or bike traffic, that it is free for public use.
 - You need two or three players a side for an outdoor game. Players do not wear blindfolds- as it is harder to hear outdoors, you will need to see.
 - Each player makes a goal about a metre wide. A mini pop-up soccer goal is ideal, but rolled-up jackets or something else soft also works well. Goals are spaced about 5 metres apart.
 - Use a large plastic or rubber ball about 10 cm in diameter).
 - Players play on their knees. They can also slide from side to side on the ground.
 - The first player orients her/himself using her/his goal, then when the referee says “play”, bounces or rolls the ball toward the opponent’s goal, or passes to their team-mate. The attacking team must stay on their own side of centre.
 - One defender plays at the goal, to block shots. The defender can only block the goal from their knees...not by lying across the whole goal.
 - The other defender must remain on their own side of centre.
 - Strategy: Passing back and forth to create an opening for a shot is the key. Because the ball must roll or bounce, and the defenders can see, it’s harder to create an opening for a shot- but fake shots or passes may help.
 - Take turns...first player to five goals wins! Let the referee have a turn playing the next game.

A few more people:

- If you have six players, you can play three a side, like regulation goal ball. Expand the playing surface a bit. Players can stand, but still remain on their side of centre.
- Communication is key- call for a pass, let your team-mates know where you are! (However, you can’t distract the other team by shouting all the time.)

A little more physical:

- To play a faster-paced more physical game:
 - Roll the ball like a bowling ball, with a good back swing and a low release.
 - Be prepared to dive or slide to block the ball, like real goal ball players do.
 - Think about the most effective ways to fake shots and passes- you can stand, but not run, and you can’t throw the ball, you still have to bounce or roll it.