



Boccia England

Changing lives through Boccia

Kate Moss

ABOUT THE NGB

We believe playing boccia changes lives. A recognised NGB since 2012, Boccia England is a small charity (10 staff members, four of who are part-time).

Over the last four years we have seen a huge **79%** increase in the number of young people playing boccia through the School Games;

- In 2018-19 there were almost **25,000** participation opportunities in Boccia through the School Games (up 30.2% since the previous year).
- In 2017, 18, **44.1% of boys** who participated were boys with SEND and **43.7% of girls** who took part were girls with SEND, demonstrating the inclusivity of the sport for young people with and without additional support needs for both mainstream and special schools. This compares to less than 10% of pupils with SEND across all sports.

Boccia within education is a priority area we are working to build on to improve the opportunities and support available over the next few years, and the School Games will be central to this.



WHY

Statistics show that less than half the number of disabled people take part in sport compared to non-disabled people, leading to an increased risk of social isolation and lack of confidence. We know that young disabled people are often lacking in life skills such as confidence, independence and resilience (Activity Alliance, 2015), skills that can be crucial in enabling people to enjoy taking part in sport.

Boccia offers a fully inclusive option for SGOs, schools and the young people taking part. Results from our Skills Award programme have shown that through playing boccia, young disabled people can significantly improve life skills such as communication and resilience.

We know that by engaging young disabled people in sport at a young age is critical to maximising the chances of them staying active as they move into adulthood. If this opportunity is not taken, it becomes much harder to engage with individuals at an older age (Activity Alliance, 2015).



ACTION

Raise the profile of boccia nationally to support more and different young people.

- Undertook research to evidence the benefits playing boccia has on specific life skills and sharing findings.
- Taking part in a recent YST SGO webinar to showcase sport competition formats. As a result, over 90 SGOs downloaded the formats in the month following the webinar compared to around 70 in previous months.
- Boccia was included in the YST Girls camp in 2019. 16 girls undertook training to support the delivery of boccia in their schools, targeting other girls not currently active.
- Working with Natspec and AoC to support and develop boccia within colleges.

THEME OF CASE STUDY

Developing provision for inclusive competition.

LEAD CONTACT

Kate Moss
kmoss@bocciaengland.org.uk



Delivery of school-based boccia programmes across England.

We have made more links between our existing school-based programmes and the School Games to maximise delivery in schools:

- The Boccia Skills Award is a secondary school programme launched in 2017 focusing on the importance of developing young people's character traits which are vital in wider life and employment. Through playing boccia in an extra-curricular club over a 10-week period, disabled young people capture their progress against key life skills.
- The Boccia School Competition is a county, regional and national level competition which provides progression for School Games competitions beyond county finals. Young people are also involved in officiating at the finals event with the programme training a number of young leaders and officials each year.



COLLABORATION WITH THE SCHOOL GAMES NETWORK

- Around 60% of competition organisers for the Boccia England School Competition Programme are SGOs so we work with them throughout the year.
- Research from our Skills Award programme has shown that many schools taking part are not currently playing boccia as part of the School Games so this has highlighted an area for us to develop further.
- Boccia England is now one of three NGBs to represent NGBs on the School Games consultation group of which SGOs and LOC members are part of.



IMPACT

“Before boccia I did nothing. I never went out, I just played on my Xbox. Now I’m determined to improve and grow every day and have something positive and worthwhile to focus on. I have friends now due to boccia, I didn’t before. Boccia is the greatest adventure I have ever been on!”
Young boccia player

We know boccia can change lives. Research from our Skills Award programme shows over 40% of pupils made significant progress against key life skills; communication, resilience, and responsibility. The data from the School Games helps to show how many young people are accessing our sport. We hope that through the SGO network and delivery of the School Games, more and more young disabled people will have an opportunity to take part in meaningful competition, develop life skills, and go on playing sport into adulthood.

“This type of (boccia) competition means that every child regardless of their ability, can take part in a proper competition and it’s really good for them. All children should have that right.”
Kim, teacher.



NEXT

We want to make it easier for SGOs and others to deliver boccia so we are; developing new resources, sourcing a cheaper set of balls for education and community use, and developing and launching a revised and shortened Leaders Award, and an updated Young Leaders Award (early 2020).

We will continue to deliver and build upon our school-based programmes. We are looking to introduce a programme similar to our Skills Award programme for primary schools in 2020 and would be keen to work with SGOs in the development of this.

