

# SANCTIONING GUIDELINES



BRITISH  
DODGEBALL

## **Introduction**

This document provides guidance on how sanctions should be applied to the sport of dodgeball to enhance game flow, promote adherence to the Dodgeball Code & punish unsporting behaviour. This is applicable to all those involved in British Dodgeball competitions, clubs, and activities at every level.

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## 1. Sanctioning Procedure

- Where possible, yellow cards, red cards and other penalties will be issued by the referee, event coordinator or other British Dodgeball official on the day of the event. However, the British Dodgeball Complaints & Disciplinary Committee also have the ability to issue sanctions retrospectively.
- “Issuing” a card or penalty to adults, or juniors at an adult event category, will involve the referee verbally notifying the offending individual where this is issued at an event. “Issuing” a card or penalty to individuals at junior events will involve the referee verbally notifying the offending individual’s coach where this is issued at an event. Where a card is issued retrospectively, the individual’s team and (if possible) the individual or their parents/guardians if aged under 18 will be notified via email following the event.
- Referees will record the issuing of blue cards, yellow cards and red card on their scoresheet and inform event coordinators of this after each match, who can inform British Dodgeball staff and the Rules & Disciplinary Committee for tracking purposes.
- Where teams field a player who should be serving a suspension, or incorrectly do not play shorthanded, the British Dodgeball regulations around forfeits apply.

## 2. Summary of Sanctions

### a) Warning:

An official warning is designed to let players know they are not acting in adherence to the Dodgeball Code, and shall be further sanctioned if they continue to act in this way. A warning may be applied to an individual, or to a whole team.

### b) Turnover:

A turnover is a sanction applied for breaches of rules which unfairly affect a team’s ball possession. Upon a turnover being called, play should cease and opponents of the offending team will announce how many balls they would like to take possession of. Game time should generally not be paused for this, the exception being when this sanction is given briefly before set time expires. Referees should play advantage only for the non-offending team for actions which occur between the foul occurring and play ceasing for the penalty (e.g. if a hit is made between the sanctionable action taking place and the referee ceasing play).

### **c) “Outs”:**

A player may be called out for committing a minor offence, or a certain offence for the first time. Upon being called out, the player is eliminated from the game and must join their team’s out box queue in the correct order. They may be brought back in to play upon a successful catch if they are at the front of the out box queue.

### **c) Blue Cards:**

Blue cards are designed to encompass minor offences/infringements, in particular where calling a player ‘out’ is not applicable or would not suffice. Being issued with a blue card in all age categories results in the offending player being sent to the penalty box for the remainder of the set in which the blue card was issued, and the entirety of the subsequent set, with their team having to play all of this period short-handed. A blue card punishment is irrespective of set length – the team may choose to immediately step off court and forfeit the set.

- Blue cards are within-match sanctions only and can be issued to players, substitutes, retrievers, and coaches. They do not carry over into other matches or events.

### **d) Yellow Cards:**

Yellow cards will be issued for all moderate offences/ infringements where a blue card is not applicable or would not be sufficient (often where the offence is considered unsportsmanlike and deliberate). Receiving a yellow card as a player in a match whilst that match is in play will result in the player being immediately called “out” (if not already out) and sent to the penalty box. In the u11 matches, the player must remain in the penalty box for two subsequent full sets. In u13, u15 and adult matches, the player must remain in the penalty box until five minutes of match play has been completed, not including timeouts and half time.

- Their team is not permitted to replace them with another player in this time and must start each set short-handed with one less person participating on court.
- In u13, u15 and adult age categories, once the penalty has been served, the offending player must move to the back of the out queue.
- Any penalty that has not been fully served when a match ends will be carried over to the next match in which the offending player plays/is a named substitute. Where this next match is at a subsequent event, the British Dodgeball Disciplinary Committee will select an event where the remainder of the penalty must be served.
- Two yellow cards received in the same match at an event will automatically result in a red card being issued to the offending player.

### e) Red Cards:

Red cards will be issued for the most serious of offences. Verbally abusing a referee or event coordinator will result in an immediate red card for the offending player or players. Receiving a red card in all age categories as a player in a match whilst that match is in play will result in the player being immediately called “out” (if not already out) and sent out of the court boundaries for the remainder of that match.

- For the remainder of the match in which the player receives the red card, their team is not permitted to replace them with another player and must start each set short-handed with one less person participating on court.
- The team aspect of this penalty must be at least equivalent to that of a yellow card – the team must play a minimum of five minutes, and up to all of the remainder of the match in which the card was issued (whichever is shortest) short-handed. Where a five minute penalty has not been fully served when a match ends, any time remaining will be carried over to the next match in which the offending player plays/ is a named substitute. Where this next match is at a subsequent event, the British Dodgeball Disciplinary Committee will select a particular event in which the remainder of the penalty must be served.
- The player will not be permitted to participate (be within the court boundaries) in any further matches at the event or round of fixtures in which the red card was received. For any of these further matches, whilst this offending player may not participate, their team no longer needs to play short-handed (unless the team has no substitutes, in which case they must play short-handed).
- The British Dodgeball Complaints & Disciplinary Committee will review red card offences and decide if further sanctions are necessary.
- Safeguarding protocols apply when designated responsible adults are required to leave the court boundaries.

### 3. Sanctioning Coaches, Substitutes and Ball Retrievers

If a substitute player, coach or ball retriever of a playing team receives a blue card, yellow card, or red card during a match, they receive the same sanctions as players:

- **Blue card:** Serve the remainder of the current set and the subsequent set in the penalty box. During this time, the team must play short-handed with one less person participating on court.

- **Yellow card:** Serve five minutes in the penalty box (any time remaining carries over into subsequent matches). During this time, the team must play that time short-handed with one less person participating on court.
- **Red card:** Immediately leave the court boundaries for the remainder of that match. For all further sets of the match in which the individual receives the red card, their team must play short-handed with one less person participating on court. The player will not be permitted to participate (be within the court boundaries) in any further matches at the event or round of fixtures in which the red card was received. The British Dodgeball Complaints & Disciplinary Committee will review red card offences and decide if further sanctions are necessary. Safeguarding protocols apply when designated responsible adults are required to leave the hall.

The offending team may choose who is removed from play when sanctions are applied, and must source a temporary replacement ball retriever in the case of a ball retriever being issued a sanction.

#### **4. Sanctioning Spectators**

Spectators are expected to adhere to the British Dodgeball Code of Conduct whilst at British Dodgeball events. Spectators may be categorised in one of two ways, with sanctions changing for each:

##### **a) Non-active players/coaches/ball retrievers:**

- These are players, coaches or ball retrievers who are representing a team at an event but not currently competing. Team representatives should be sanctioned with official warnings followed by yellow and red cards for progressive breaches of the Code of Conduct (depending on severity).
- Receiving a yellow card will result in that player having to start the next match in which they are a named player/substitute in the penalty box and remain there for five minutes. During this time, the team must play short-handed with one less person participating on court.
- Receiving a red card will result in that player having to remain outside of the court boundaries for the entirety of the next match in which they are a named player/substitute. For all sets of the first match after which the player receives the red card, their team must play short-handed with one less person participating on court. The player will not be permitted to participate in any further matches at the event or round of fixtures in which the red card was received. Whilst the offending player may not participate, their team no longer needs to play short-handed for further matches.

## **b) Spectators:**

- These are individuals who are not officially linked to a competing team, and may consist of parents, friends, family, fans or those watching who play for a club that isn't officially competing at the event. Spectators should be sanctioned with official warnings followed by being asked to leave the sports hall for the duration of the match, and finally being asked to leave the sports hall for the remainder of the event for progressive breaches of the code of conduct (depending on severity).
- If a spectator in need of sanctioning is clearly aged under 18 with a parent or guardian in attendance, then the referee should address the parent/guardian, giving them a chance to address the individual's behaviour.
- Referees must notify event coordinators and the British Dodgeball Complaints & Disciplinary Committee of anyone asked to leave the venue for a match, who will in turn review offences and decide if further sanctions are necessary.

## **5. Sanctioning Juniors**

Referees should apply sanctions as described in this document to both juniors and adults. When issuing a sanction to a junior, referees should not give the sanction to the junior directly, instead communicating the sanction to the team's coach, who can relay this to the offending player and assist in managing their penalty. As part of inclusive refereeing practices, the referee may choose to politely explain the sanction to the offending junior player in the presence of their team coach who can provide further clarity in case the player is new, or requires additional language, learning or emotional support.

## **6. Match Context and End-of-Match Offences**

Referees will consider the match context when issuing sanctions, and in particular will consider the time in a set or match at which an offence occurs. Where an offence occurs in the final set or penultimate set of a match and/or is very likely to have an impact on the final match score, referees should consider issuing a more severe punishment than the offence might at other times warrant. For instance, a player who is clearly "out" and takes time to leave the court/raise their hands to signify that they are "out" (therefore potentially misleading the opposition around the number of players left "in") should be issued with a yellow card or even a red card dependent on impact/severity, even if they might have been issued with a blue card/yellow card for this offence at an earlier point in the match.

Referees must also report end-of-match offences to the British Dodgeball Complaints & Disciplinary Committee for further consideration of whether additional team or player sanctions are appropriate, including docking of match points.

## **7. Team Offences**

Where sanctioning just one individual is not appropriate, the British Dodgeball Disciplinary Committee will review where a team sanction should be applied, such as a points deduction.

## **8. Cumulative Yellow and Red Cards**

- For every 3 yellow cards received by a player within a season, the British Dodgeball Disciplinary Committee will review whether an additional 1 match ban should be issued. The event in which this ban is to be served would be decided by the British Dodgeball Complaints & Disciplinary Committee.
- Where 2 yellow cards are issued in the same match and therefore a player receives a red card, these will be logged as two yellow cards for the purposes of additional penalties for cumulative cards.
- Where 2 red cards received by a player within a season, the British Dodgeball Complaints & Disciplinary Committee will review whether an additional match/event ban should be issued. The event in which this ban is to be served would be decided by the British Dodgeball Complaints & Disciplinary Committee.

## **9. Safeguarding**


- If an individual who has been asked to leave the hall is a guardian or designated responsible adult for juniors, and there are no other designated responsible adults present, then juniors will also be required to leave the hall for safeguarding reasons. This may result in match forfeits if a competing junior team no longer has a designated responsible adult present in the hall.
- Any juniors given sanctions who are required to leave the hall will not be monitored by event coordinators, and must be monitored by their parent, guardian or designated responsible adult. This may result in match forfeits if a competing junior team no longer has a designated responsible adult present in the hall.
- All individuals are encouraged to notify referees and British Dodgeball event coordinators of any safeguarding issues experienced during an event.
- For more information, please refer to the [British Dodgeball safeguarding policy](#).




## 10. Sanctionable Offences

**Blue:** minimum sanction

**Red:** Context-dependant sanction,

 : progress sanction with repeated infringements

Turnover	Warning	Out	Blue Card	Yellow Card	Red Card
<b>Gameplay</b>					
More than 3 players advance past return line during the rush					
Competing for/touching opponent's balls before your own are made live during rush					
		Deliberate/avoidable physical contact during opening rush		Deliberate/avoidable physical contact during match	Dangerous physical contact during match
Retriever error - touching ball on court, contact with official, returning ball to opponents, moving into opponent's half			Retriever error - interfering with play e.g. touching a live ball over court	Retriever error - deliberately interfering with play	
Exiting player interfering with play				Exiting player interfering with play - deliberate	
		Not making a valid attempt after 'play ball' time has been exceeded			
		Invalid attempt, including kicking or spiking	Invalid attempt - near end of set		
		Throwing or faking at a non-player, player clearly already out or after time has been clearly stopped			
			Avoidable or reckless close proximity headshot	Intentional headshot	
			Non-player entering court - not interfering in play	Non-player entering court - interfering in play	
				Deliberate/ avoidable physical contact	Dangerous physical contact
<b>Unsporting</b>					
	Verbal offence including taunting				Serious verbal offence e.g. discriminatory
	Calling others out, persistent appealing or questioning the referee	Aggressive, unnecessary or persistent appealing or questioning the referee			
	Not leaving court in a timely manner			Remaining on court in spite of being clearly "out" or being called out	
		Refusing to comply with referee's instruction			
		Swearing loudly/within earshot of spectators		Swearing - direct	Swearing at an official - direct
		Time-wasting	Time-wasting (near end of set)		
		Unsportsmanlike conduct - not likely to be deliberate		Unsportsmanlike conduct - deliberate (e.g. shielding another player once out)	
			Intentionally imitating an out player when still in		
<b>Serious Misconduct</b>					
					Spitting at an opponent
					Serious physical offence i.e. violent conduct
<b>Assistant Refereeing</b>					
				Explicit lack of attention, including use of mobile phone	

Referees may apply enhanced sanctions in contexts relating to [6: End of match offences](#).

## 11. Communicating With Referees & Appeals

- Players are permitted to ask referees a non-aggressive question about the outcome of a recent play where this was not fully clarified by the referee/other official. Where possible this should be directed to the referee by the captain or coach only.
- If the referee deems this to be aggressive or unnecessary, then sanctions will apply.
- If a coach or captain has asked a question or appealed a decision and the referee has given an answer or confirmed a decision, they must accept this. If a coach or captain does not accept a refereeing decision or an answer they have given and continues to question, then sanctions will apply.
- Coaches, captains and teams are encouraged to provide feedback on refereeing by completing the form on our [Referees](#) page. This includes positive comments and constructive feedback on decisions referees have made which the team did not agree with. This feedback will shape future referee training and help develop the level of refereeing in the UK.
- British Dodgeball will not tolerate verbal or physical abuse towards referees. Any such behaviour must be sanctioned and reported to the event coordinator and to British Dodgeball.
- **Video Evidence:** Video evidence can not be accepted by referees as a live appeal mechanism during a match. Teams are however encouraged to submit this as evidence after a match along with any feedback or complaints as outlined in the [Complaints & Disciplinary policy](#).

## 12. De-Escalation Strategies

Referees are encouraged to use preventative measures to help control game flow.

Some techniques are outlined below:

- **Empathetic Language:** “I know that you don’t agree with my call, but I’m afraid that’s what I saw. Play needs to continue.” – this can help younger players or those with emotional needs feel understood.
- **Language of Choice:** “If you choose to continue questioning me, I will need to give you a blue card, or you can accept my decision and avoid being sanctioned. What do you want to do?” – this clearly outlines how actions lead to consequences.
- **Giving a Warning:** “If you remain on court for too long despite clearly being out again, you will be given a yellow card.” – this clearly outlines the referee’s expectation of behaviour.
- **Ask, don’t tell:** “Can you just go back to your box please coach so that I can discuss this issue with the other referee?” – this is polite and encourages mutual respect.