



THE DODGEBALL SURVEY 2023 REPORT



BRITISH
DODGEBALL

INTRODUCTION

The Dodgeball Survey 2023 was open for responses for 8 weeks between December 2022 and February 2023. The main aims of the survey were to:

- Learn more about the current makeup of our dodgeball community
- Gather feedback on the provision of dodgeball in the UK, including details on coach education and competitions
- Educate respondents on the wide range of areas we work in and gather feedback on some of our current initiatives
- Gather feedback on the impacts of COVID-19 on the dodgeball community

We asked questions which were grouped into 5 categories:

- About You
- Our Services & Initiatives
- School, College & University Dodgeball
- Community Dodgeball
- Rules & Refereeing

By asking questions relevant to these categories, we welcomed respondents from a wide range of background in order to hear from more people and subsequently learn more about the landscape of the sport in the UK.

We would like to thank everyone that took time to complete the survey and help us learn more about your involvement in dodgeball and your views on the sport; this information will help us to continue to develop the sport to encourage people from all ages and backgrounds to Come Join In. As part of a continued dialogue between British Dodgeball, our members and those involved in the playing, coaching, teaching, administering or spectating of dodgeball in the UK, we have developed a list of actions to be undertaken which should prove effective and are realistically achievable. This will help us to improve the sport we all love in line with both your feedback and our [2022-2025 4-year strategy](#).

You will therefore see the following in this report:

- Survey Findings
- **Next Steps**
- *Quotes*



CONTENTS

- Our Initiatives & Services:
 - Girls Dodge Too!
 - 4-Year Strategy 2022-2025
 - Come Join In Funding
 - Dodgemark Accreditation
 - Coach Education
- School, College & University Dodgeball
- Community Dodgeball
- Rules & Referees
 - Rules
 - Referees
- Other Comments

ABOUT US

British Dodgeball is a non-profit organisation that invests all income back into developing the sport of dodgeball in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We currently have 5 full time and 1 part time member of staff and are confident in our claim to be the leading National Federation for dodgeball in the world with the most comprehensive grass roots development program in the sport.

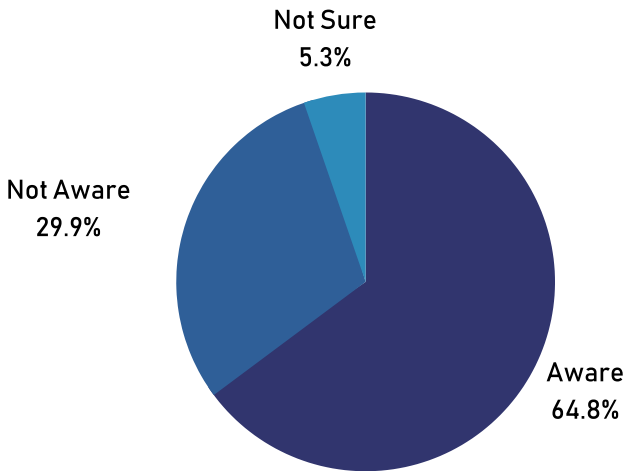
Our staff members work tirelessly to administer and deliver a wide range of services including the provision of over 200 league events and one-day open events annually for primary schools, high schools, universities, junior community clubs and adult community clubs; young leadership training and coach education provision in both online and face to face formats; club development support by way of bid writing, resource development and education via webinars; sales of products such as dodgeballs and lesson plans; and manage teams of volunteers and casual staff members such as rules and disciplinary committees, event coordinators and referees to ensure everyone that engages in the sport finds it to be safe, fun and inclusive. We don't receive any funding from any of the Home Nations sport councils yet, so we need to generate every penny ourselves through the above services & products in order to keep the organisation financially solvent and to re-invest back into dodgeball.

Our Vision

“Inspire generations and communities to experience the benefits of playing dodgeball”

COME JOIN IN FOCUS AREA

Awareness of Come Join In Funding Scheme



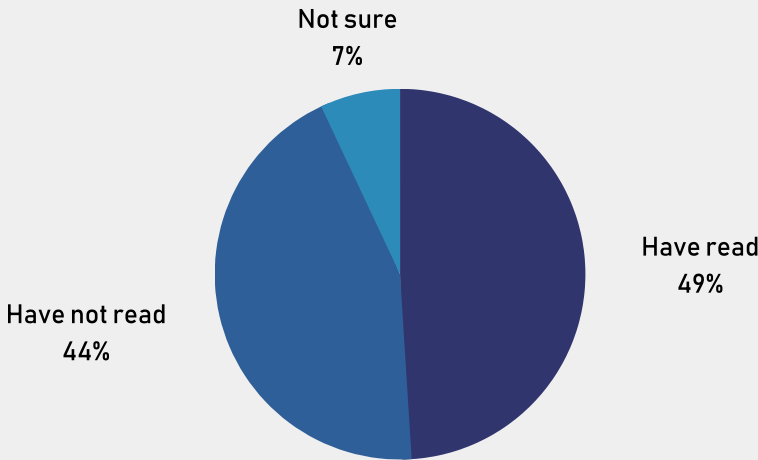
- Key Numbers:
- 9% know someone who is interested in setting up a new club using Come Join In funding.
 - 19% know young people who would like be interested in attending a Come Join In festival.
 - 40% are interested in applying for funding supported by British Dodgeball to cover the training of new coaches, equipment, venue hire and promotion.

The Come Join In focus area is about welcoming new people to the sport of dodgeball and for British Dodgeball, its member clubs and partners to work together and provide an open and inclusive way into the sport. We support the growth of the sport by providing grants of up to £500 ourselves to help set up new clubs in new areas of the country or new sections at already existing clubs, offer Come Join In festivals which are free to attend and provide training and resources to help clubs welcome and retain newcomers more effectively. To date, we have invested £11.5k supporting the set up of 20 new community clubs or sections in the UK.

- We will allocate some space in each of our monthly newsletters to Come Join In in addition to promoting this area further on social media. We will celebrate teams that have been set up and promoting new ideas that club committees can use to make their club more inviting and welcoming to new players.
- We will continue the funding scheme as it has been so successful in the formation of new clubs.
- Our staff will follow up with everyone that knows someone who is interested in setting up a new club, those who know young poeple that may be interested in attending an upcoming Come Join In festival, or are interested in funding.

4-YEAR STRATEGY 2022-2025

Awareness of the British Dodgeball 4-Year Strategy 2022-2025



Over 10% more respondents have seen our 4-year strategy than in last year's survey, which shows that we have been successful in publicising this and the key areas of focus contained within.

- Coaching is clearly a growing area within dodgeball. This is natural in an upcoming sport as the workforce develops alongside the player base. We already offer Coach Membership for £20 per year which provides access to a Coaching Forum, monthly newsletters & discussions, free coaching resources and discounts on coaching courses. We provide 45 free activity ideas in our DodgeFive resources, 108 activity ideas in our lesson plans & over 50 activity ideas in our Level 1 & Level 2 coaching course resources - we will promote these further to the community.
- As we are not a funded organisation, there is a limit to how much of our limited staff time we can invest in creating free coaching resources; we will investigate methods of promoting Coach Membership to engage more community coaches and assess what else can be offered in line with the feedback above, including guidance on how to get paid to coach dodgeball.

GIRLS DODGE TOO! & DODGEMARK ACCREDITATION

Girls Dodge Too! Project

Girls Dodge Too! was initially a project funded by Sport England, which ran from June 2021 to June 2022 and engaged 860 women and girls across England. The project utilised funding to provide taster sessions, leadership courses and events across the country and involved a whole host of member clubs. You can see a summary of the project [here](#). Currently, we are seeking further investment to deliver on what has been a fantastically successful initiative.

- Key Numbers:
- 34% want more information on how we can support them or their club to set up a women and girls session.
 - We will respond to those wishing for more information on how we can support the setup of a women/girls section for them to proceed with or forward to club committees.
 - We will merge Girls Dodge Too! with our Come Join In focus area so that clubs can apply for GDT specific funding via this stream, and continue to promote new opportunities, publicise successes, seek funding, share resources and support the delivery of new women and girls dodgeball sessions.

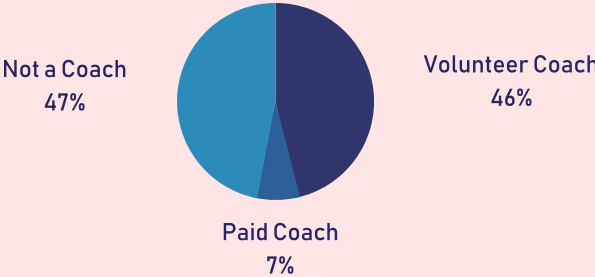
Dodgemark Accreditation - Plan To Apply

Dodgemark is our club accreditation scheme, with clubs that meet the criteria prepared set up for the future with key policies & processes in place.

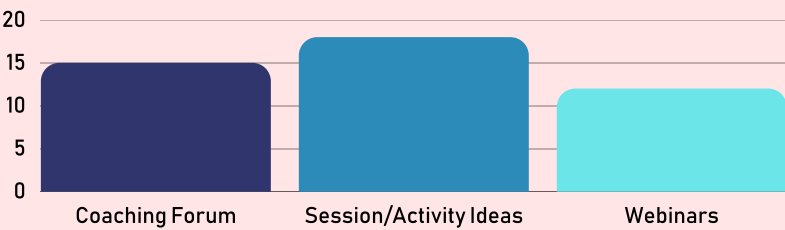
- Key Numbers:
- 24% said their club has plans to apply in the next 18 months. 63% of respondents were not sure.
 - We will deliver a Dodgemark webinar outlining the importance of this scheme and how clubs that complete the accreditation journey will benefit. Webinar details are [here](#).

GET INTO COACHING

Coaching Status



Further Support for Coaches



- Key Numbers:
- 53% of coaches have aspirations to be paid to coach dodgeball in schools or at junior or adult level.

OUR INITIATIVES & SERVICES: COMMENTS & RESPONSES

I find the BD website difficult to navigate with the store/shop section, when trying to see what coaching options are available, as well as competitions.

This is tricky because we offer such a wide range of services & support e.g. equipment sales, lesson plans, open and league competitions for schools, universities and clubs, a refereeing hub, online & face to face courses... It's a lot! We'll look into what the most valuable parts of the site are and try to reframe our menu's to provide a more intuitive user experience.

Entry point for coaches if going into an existing club is expensive unless the club has enough money and resources to help sponsor it.

It costs £160 per person to train to be a Level 1 & Level 2 dodgeball coach (or £110 with coach membership), which is far more affordable than other sports e.g. Basketball £334, Handball £475, Netball £360. For those that can negotiate even a small payment or a benefit such as a free session worth £5 in exchange for coaching, the training pays for itself over the course of a season. We are working with clubs via webinars this year to encourage them to consider how they can budget for the training of new coaches to strengthen their organisation.

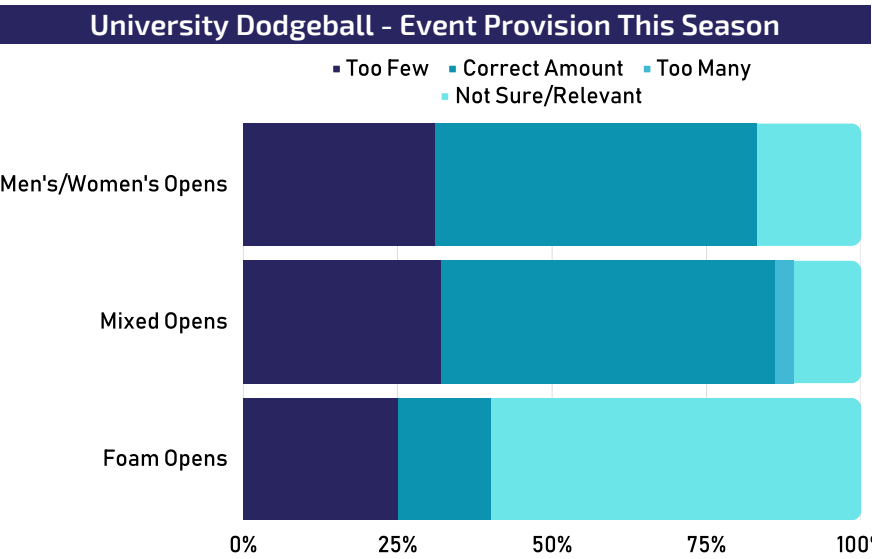
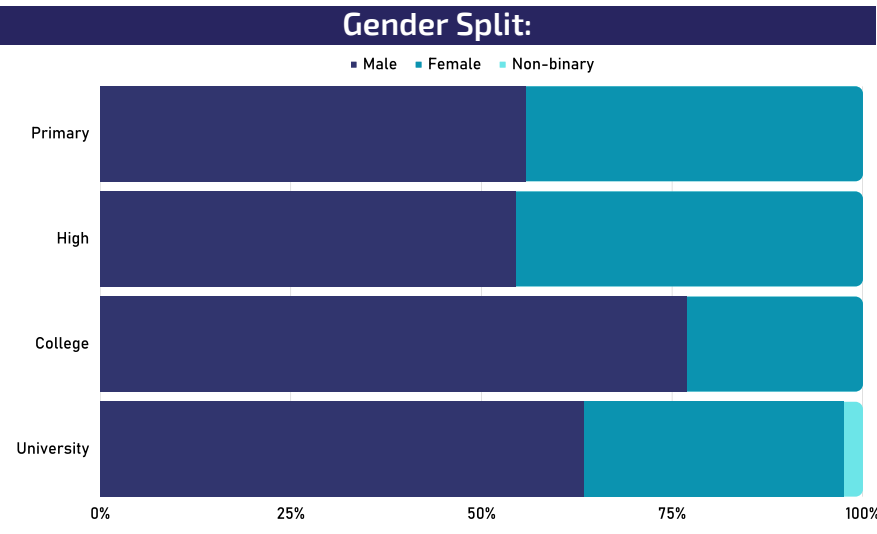
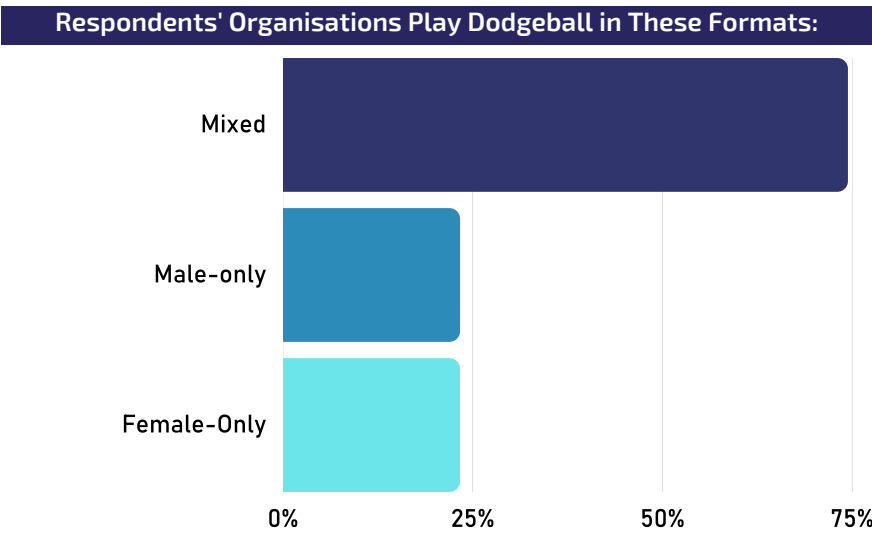
Make the coaching qualifications more work to get. I was a qualified judo coach and had to do coursework and attend multiple seminars to get a level 1 license. As far as I'm aware the standard to get a coaching license with BD is much lower

Currently, our priority is offering a high-quality but affordable course so that cost does not act as a barrier to potential coaches. A longer course would result in a more expensive course as more venue and staff time is needed, and may put people off. We want as many people as possible in the UK with a base level of knowledge in the sport; those wishing for more are encouraged to take the Level 3 Certificate in Coaching Dodgeball.

Have a separate student membership that covers both uni and national league competitions together.

We reassess our membership offer annually. Any changes to student memberships must be assessed and cleared with BUCS, who are a key stakeholder in our university dodgeball pathway, so lots of considerations often need to be made.



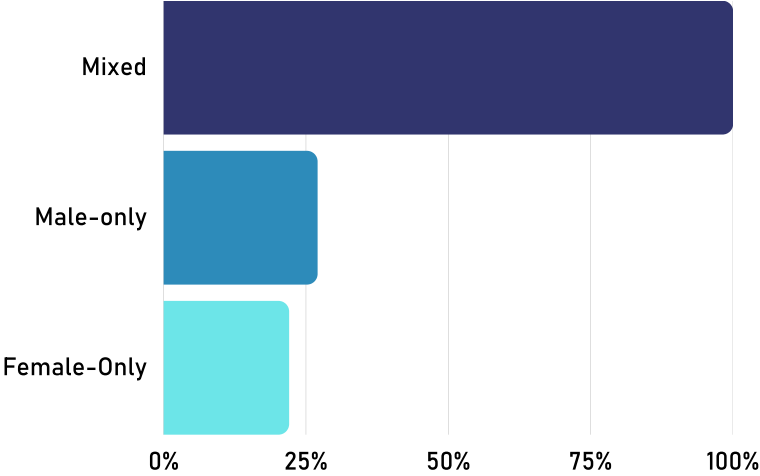


- Key Numbers:
- Respondents showed interest in entering the following competitions next season:
 - 56% women's regional leagues
 - 76% men's regional leagues
 - 52% women's adult community opens
 - 72% men's adult community opens
 - 60% mixed national league
 - 36 respondents say their community club might be interested in supporting a school championship event.
 - 21 respondents say their university club would be interested in supporting a school championship event.

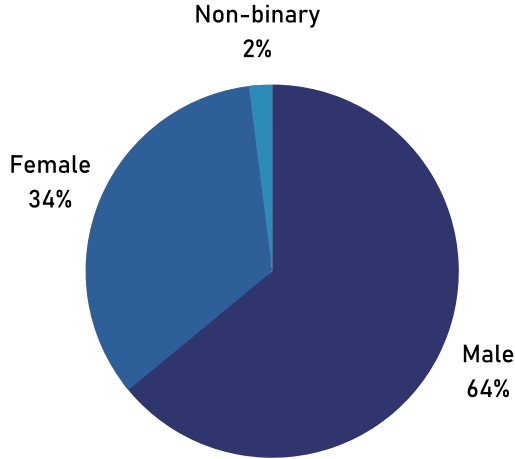
Dodgeball in educational establishments is growing at an amazing rate: we are hosting our largest primary school championships ever, with 35 events taking place at county, regional and national level; we are hosting our inaugural high school championships with 5 events taking place regionally leading up to a national finals; we worked with more colleges than ever to train junior leaders for the events; and we have held 50 BUCS university dodgeball league events and university open events, with over 80 different university teams taking part.

- We will expand both our primary and high school offer beyond England, and look to invite local club and university players to get involved as volunteers in order to promote their organisations further.
- We will continue to work with key partners such as the Youth Sport Trust, School Games Organisers, Active Schools & Bishop Sports to encourage standardisation of the sport.
- Our university offer will clearly promote opportunities beyond university dodgeball, such as those outlined above.
- We will launch the Higher Education Dodgeball Activator scheme - to recruit and train dodgeball activators at each university to further promote the development of dodgeball in each institution.

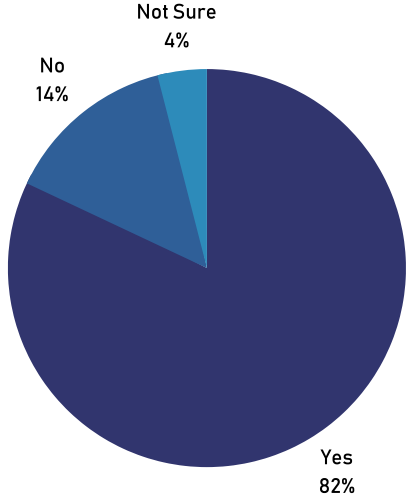
Respondents' Organisations Play Dodgeball in These Formats:



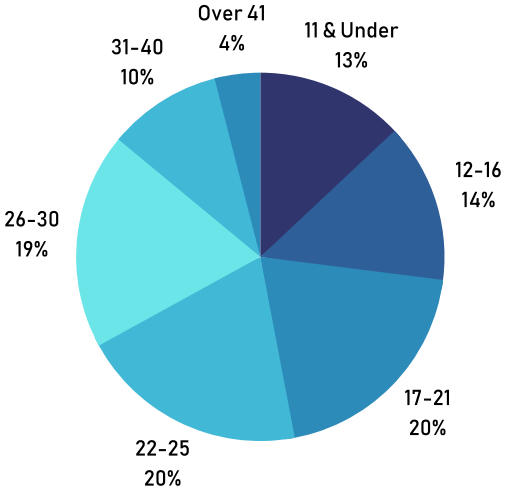
Gender Split @ Respondents' Clubs



Clubs with Membership (including Code of Conduct)

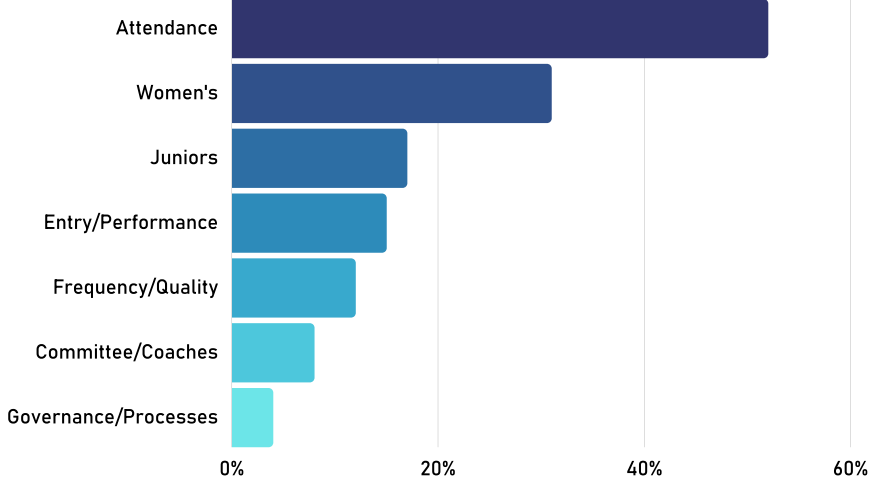


Age Split @ Respondents' Clubs

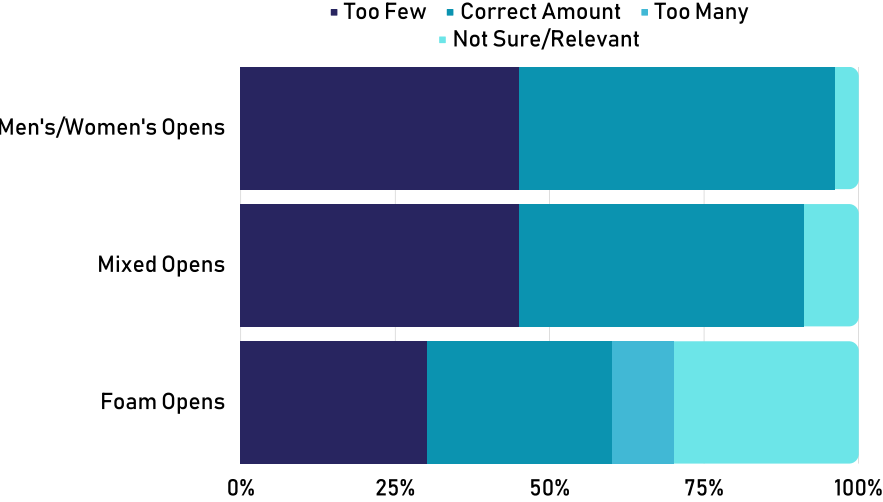


- Key Numbers:
- 23% say their clubs may be interested in entering teams including older juniors (15/16/17 year olds) into adult regional leagues to aid their transition to adult dodgeball.
 - 16% say their clubs may enter an additional women's team into the national league system next season.
 - Respondents listed these reasons for their club not entering women's teams into adult opens:
 - 27% - Not enough players
 - 15% - Open format e.g. long day
 - 12% - Travel distance
 - 9% - Focus on other events e.g. national league

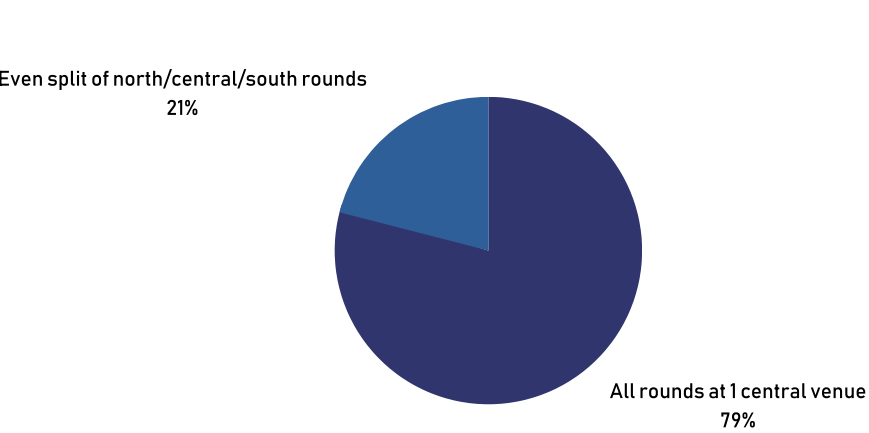
How You Want To See Your Club Grow



Community Dodgeball - Event Provision This Season



English National League - Geographical Preference



How can British Dodgeball Support Your Club?



This has been our busiest adult season yet, with over 95 adult league and open events taking place which equates to an average of slightly less than three per weekend during the season calendar. It is positive that some players believe their clubs will enter additional women's teams into the league, and use the regional leagues as a stepping stone for older junior players to transition to adult events. It has been useful to receive feedback around the desired structure of future English national leagues, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure our usual venue of St George's Park and there are no guarantees that we'll always be able to play here.

- We will continue to promote the regional league system as an inclusive place to play in a more relaxed environment, ideal for newer players and juniors learning to play at adult level.
- We will explore alternative event formats in efforts to engage women's teams in open events, and always look to host women's regional league events when enough teams show interest in each region.
- We will explore the possibility of adding more open events to the season calendar (this can be tricky however, due to the huge number of events that we are already delivering!).
- We will aim to always keep the English National league top tiers in one central location for the entire season.
- We will look to promote the benefits of membership to all clubs in future emails and webinars, and will use the feedback given to tailor our future club development webinar topics and resources (e.g. creating an example funding bid) so clubs that engage continue to find them useful.

COMMUNITY CLUB DODGEBALL: COMMENTS & RESPONSES

More regional competitions and opportunities for women's dodgeball

Scottish dodgeball needs to be supported by the teams taking part in the competitions, and due to what seems an uneven effort across the board, this maybe should be monitored to ensure the future of Scottish dodgeball.

I think a foam series is hard and would be more beneficial as opens as I find it is restricting people engaging whose club is not interested.

I've loved the journey joining up with you all, wish I'd done it sooner

I would like to see all league fixtures return to Saturdays to maximise the opportunities to play dodgeball for the majority of our members.

Training team coaches on how to welcome new members and retain them properly. We don't seem to retain people who haven't played before so we need to work on this as a club.

Planning of events: some weekends there are back to back meets (eg mixed and nationals). No more Sunday 8pm matches please.

➔ We will look to promote and organise women's regional leagues as soon as enough teams in an area show interest. We will also explore alternative event formats in efforts to engage women's teams in open events.

➔ We all have the same goals in terms of growing the sport and need to work together to achieve this, especially considering we are limited by a small team of just 5 full time staff members. We will use our new Just Go system to contact members directly more often than relying on clubs to pass messages on, in the hopes that this makes members more aware of how they can help to develop dodgeball in the UK.

➔ Any foam events delivered next season will be done so as open events to remove this barrier and make it easier for all players to come join in.

➔ Thank you!

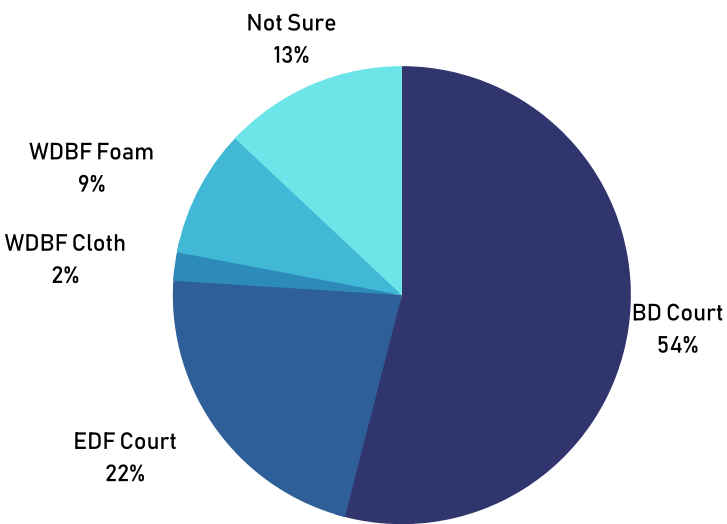
➔ We have very limited control on venue availability due to competing with other sports and bookings for space, having a finite number of event coordinators & referees and limited staff time to book in the 200+ events we run each season.

➔ Sustaining participants is key to club growth! This is actually something we already provide guidance for on our [Come Join In](#) page and provide further training on as part of our [Level 1 Award in Coaching Dodgeball](#).

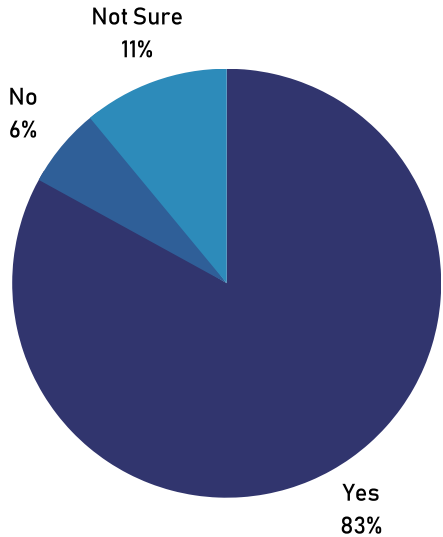
➔ Did you know we have run over 200 events this year? Fitting many of these into 30 in-season weekends can be tricky, and the sheer amount makes some clashes and weekend unavoidable. Similarly, the amount of matches that need to take place in certain leagues sometimes mean early starts and late finishes are unavoidable. Nonetheless, we will explore alternative methods for reducing travel time, early starts and late finishes.



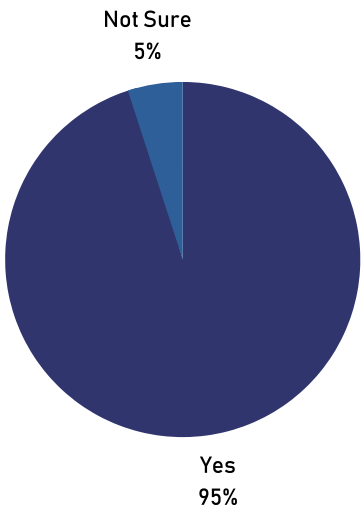
Adults - Preferred Court Size



Do you Prefer the New BD Retriever Rules?



Juniors - Do you Prefer the New u11 Court & Line Rules?



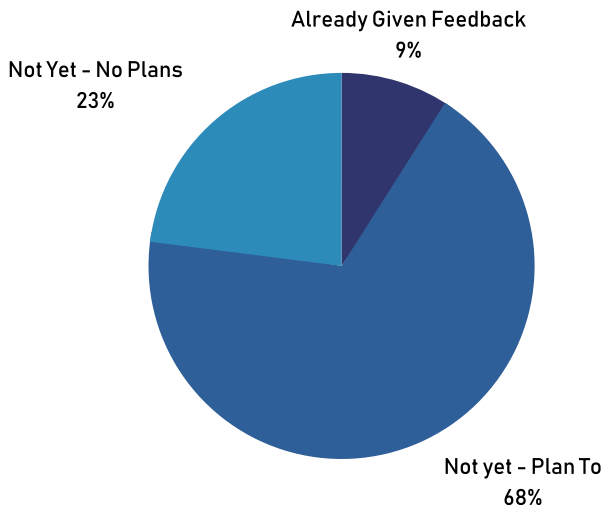
Honesty & Sportsmanship



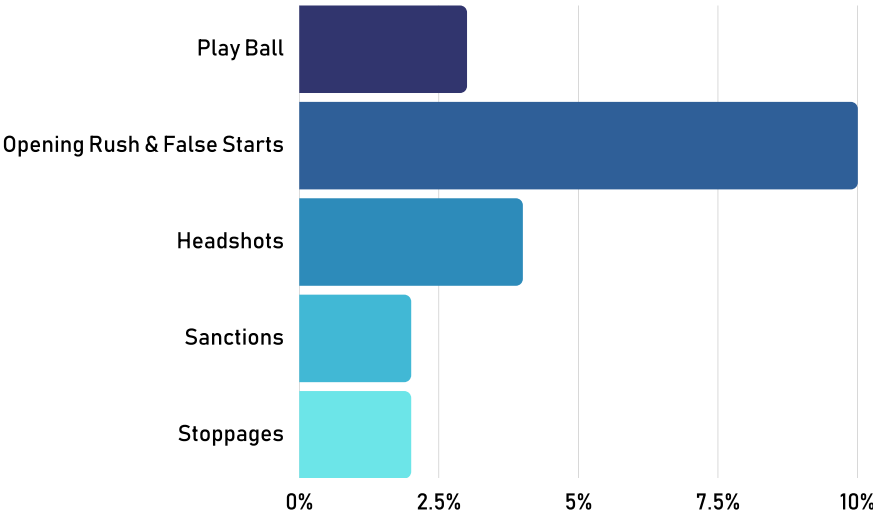
Respect Towards Staff



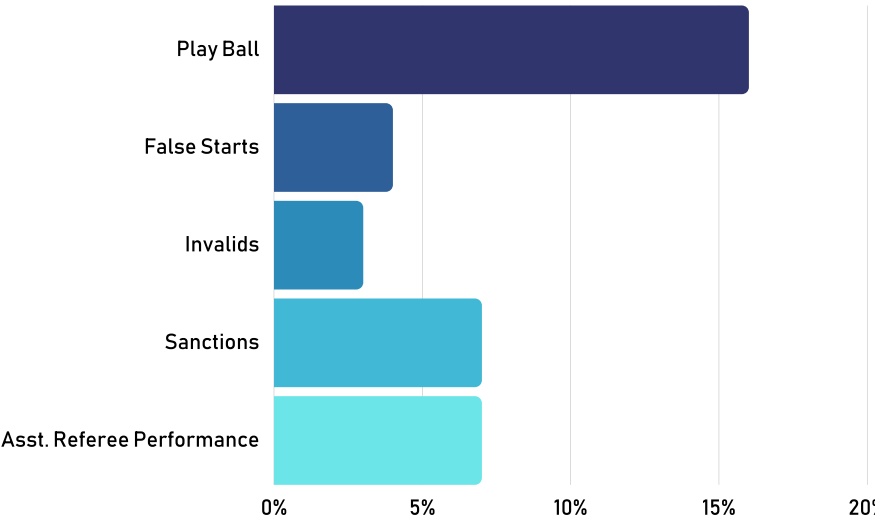
Referee Feedback Form



Which Rules Do You Find Unclear?



Which Rules Could Referees Improve Consistency Regarding?



We made some significant changes to our ruleset this season, including removing rules regarding retrievers (giving them more freedom to be a more integral part of the team) and changing the under 11's court and line rules (to better align to the high school & adult court). It is great that these have been received positively. We are also in the process of updating our referee recruitment and training structure (see our [Referee](#) webpage for our new Referee Standards, information on training and working as a new referee, refereeing standard operating procedures and more), and plan to share more regarding this in the near future.

- We will pass feedback to the EDF and WDBF regarding our respondents' preferences regarding the court size for both adults and juniors, and retriever rules.
- We have added guidance regarding how British Dodgeball members including referees and staff members should report abuse, and will share this more widely.
- We will continue to share the Referee Feedback form and better explain how it is used; this can be completed after any British Dodgeball event with regards to both main referees and assistant referees – feedback is kept anonymous and helps our referee manager/disciplinary committee to understand current issues and therefore provide tailored feedback to individual referees, plan relevant training for the wider team and ensure assistant referees are accountable & can be sanctioned/supported if required..
- We will pass feedback about unclear rules and referee inconsistencies to the rules committee and our referee manager to be explored further.
- We will email members regarding new rule changes in addition to posting them on social media. It is worth noting that we will make every effort not to amend the rulebook partway through a season.
- We will list disciplinary actions on our website so that players can see when and why sanctions are given out.
- We now have an [Assistant Refereeing](#) section on the website to help better explain the role to new players so they can do a better job when asked to act as an assistant referee. We will explore how we can provide further support for assistant referees.

RULES & REFEREES: COMMENTS & RESPONSES

<p>Rule changes should be shared more widely, not just via email to clubs.</p>	<p>➔ We recognise that club contacts don't always pass updates on to their players, which can cause confusion. We will now use our Just Go membership system to contact players to share updates directly.</p>
<p>1. We need more referees and we need a better way at engaging as a group of referees to ensure a good standard.</p> <p>2. I find the refereeing inconsistent with varying standards.</p>	<p>➔ We have recently developed our Referee Standards & SOP's alongside a referee development programme to train new referees to be more consistent. We will share this information with members before shifting our focus to recruiting new referees.</p>
<p>1. Appreciate the quality of reffing atm, some extra pressure being applied to ensure line refs are doing their jobs though?</p> <p>2. Clubs don't train their squads to line ref properly.</p>	<p>➔ We will offer free training with league entry next year which a member can access and cascade training to their players. We will highlight to members that the Referee Feedback form can be used to provide feedback on assistant referees so that they are more accountable, and can provide support or sanctions as necessary for substandard assistant refereeing.</p>
<p>Thanks to referees for giving their time for the Junior leagues. Ed did a fab job with the League in Leicester. At the Remembrance Cup, Adam was fabulous with our Juniors as always.</p>	<p>➔ Thanks for the positive feedback! We will pass this on at our next referee webinar.</p>
<p>You have a referee feedback form which is great! I think more clarity on who views this and what could be done. As I think people are hesitant to use this in case a ref they complain about can view this.</p>	<p>➔ Only one person (our Referee Manager) sees the referee feedback. This is kept anonymous and used to inform future training for individual referees and for the wider network if appropriate. We will make how this information is used more clear on our website on the form page.</p>
<p>The sanctions document is clearer with the table, that's a good job well done.</p>	<p>➔ Thanks, we recognise the need to make sure the rules & sanctions should be as simple as possible to prevent them from becoming a barrier to those wishing to play or referee, and will provide resources such as this where we can.</p>
<p>Refs are going to make mistakes and the fast paced nature of dodgeball means things get missed. there are certain players who have a reputation for not walking when hit and personally I would look to sanction players who are intentionally and consistently dishonest. Overall the standard of refereeing is good and anyone expecting refs to make no mistakes is unrealistic.</p>	<p>➔ Refereeing any sport is hard, but dodgeball is one of the hardest with multiple fast moving objects to track at al times. It is our goal that our referees meet the Refereeing Standards and any frustration at a referee is due to a difference in perception (e.g. a ball bouncing vs a direct hit on a close call) rather than a difference in application of the rules or through a referee's conduct. We will continue to stress the importance of sanctioning those who act dishonestly or in an unsporting manner so that this is appropriately addressed.</p>
<p>I think that players swearing at and being generally disrespectful to line refs should warrant more than just a warning, especially for players/teams known for bad behaviour. My first experience of being a line ref for a Mixed competition was not positive, and it has put me off bringing my team to those leagues in the future.</p>	<p>➔ We do not tolerate any abuse towards any of our staff, players or referees at our events, and this includes those who are acting as assistant referees. As you say, this can ruin people's enjoyment of the sport and actively slow down dodgeball's growth by making people not want to enter events.. We will share how abuse can be reported to both members and staff members so that any offenders can be dealt with appropriately.</p>

Thanks to our respondents for their final comments. We noted two particular patterns of feedback: Disciplinary decisions (5%) & Livestreams (5%). We have listed these below alongside some more general comments:

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS: COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Post-match complaints - I like the system where teams are able to send in footage of cheating or rule-breaks. I think that any complaints / final decisions should be make public. This allows for consistency across the sport and for everyone to see the standard.

We are proud of our rules and regulations committees, the majority being volunteers from the dodgeball community, and who also handle disciplinary issues. The disciplinary panels are extremely active when complaints come in, and often decide whether to uphold or dismiss complaints well inside the time limits provided in our [Complaints Policy](#).

You should publicise disciplinary decisions. I know it's managed by staff and volunteers, so would require time but can this be done?

We will add a page to our website which will list sanctions and disciplinary actions which are handed out. The page will contain a table similar to this in order to publicise what has been given out in order

Disciplinary actions need to be publicised by British Dodgeball. I have heard rumours about certain decisions made and that is all. I have no idea how many players or clubs have received disciplinary actions for cheating or unsporting behaviour. This lack of transparency hurts the sport as there are no visible consequences and immoral players will not be dissuaded.

Regarding transfers specifically, there have recently been instances of players not responding to follow-up requests from the committee upon submitting a request, and then playing anyway without formal approval. We encourage everyone to read our [regulations](#) regarding transfers to better understand how a request should proceed.

GENERAL: COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Punishment for not showing up to a fixture. We have had the situation 3 or 4 times this year where one of our opponents haven't attended with either short or no notice. This has meant our team has attended to play 1 game. Yes we get a 30-0 win, but to a lot of our players that's not what it's about.

We will pass this feedback on to the regulations panel for exploring possible additional/alternative sanctions.

Dedicated and committed to growing a great sport.

Keep the forward thinking going and continue to raise the awareness of the sport through all routes.

Thank you for the positive feedback! Our staff work extremely hard to grow the sport so it's always nice to hear positive comments.

Overall, I think British Dodgeball do a great job of promoting the sport and running enjoyable competitions.

LIVESTREAM: COMMENTS & RESPONSES

I'd like to see a clearly community broadcasting plan and support for those trying to help promote the support. Supporting the live streams is important for the community as they are extremely popular within your membership and are a really good recruitment tool.

We want to support a livestream that promotes dodgeball, but we do have a responsibility to ensure anything shown is regulated in terms of data protection, and that the sport is shown in the best possible light.

Live streams - I believe as a sport we need to be pursuing live streams. I appreciate there are regulations/rules that will need to be adhered too, but it will only help the sport grow.

We initially had one staff member who started the livestream this season in a voluntary capacity, but this can no longer continue. As such, we are currently exploring options as to how these can continue. To run these sustainably, we'll need time to make the following considerations:

- GDPR considerations and an effective system for opting in (Why? Some under 18's may not legally be allowed to feature online whatsoever for safeguarding reasons).
- Allocating staff for volunteer recruitment/management
- Equipment considerations
- Graphic considerations

We are not currently able to pay for livestream services without raising league entry fees, so this will need to be volunteer-led.





BRITISH DODGEBALL

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March 2023