

BOWLS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

The sport of Bowls can be played by almost anyone, with or without a disability. It can be played by men, women and children alike. Age doesn't matter, it is a sport of skill not strength.

It can be played in many formats, singles, pairs, triples and fours. It can be played in teams of whatever number you wish. It can be played competitively at local, national and international level or it can be a social pastime, whatever you want.

Bowlers with a disability can compete with or against non- disabled bowlers in most situations. It is one of the most accessible and integrated sports readily available around the country. It is also a great sociable sport.

In general in recent years the game has become far more accessible to people with disabilities with the development of wheelchairs designed especially for bowling greens to prevent damage to the greens along with several other aids enabling more participation in the sport.

The structure and history of bowls for people with a disability.

Each disability sports group has a national bowling squad:

C P Sport - for people with Cerebral Palsy, Stroke and Head Injury.

EALABA - English Amputee and Les Autres Bowls Ass. - for amputees and all other disabilities that don't fit into the other specific organizations, ie; Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy etc.

BWBA - British Wheelchair Bowls Association - for spinal injuries and other wheelchair users.

VIBE– Visually Impaired Bowls England– for people who are blind and visually impaired.

Historically each of these groups ran, and still do run their own national championships.

In 2004 an umbrella organization specifically for bowls was formed and named 'Disability Bowls England', bringing together the four organizations for communication and selection purposes. DBE also host a 'Masters Tournament' each year for which the four member groups nominate their four top bowlers to play off over a weekend to determine the 'Master' bowler for that year.

Disability Bowls England has adopted Gedling Indoor Bowls Club as their 'home'.

DBE now has charity registration and has appointed a Board of Trustees..

Chairman - Paul Brown

Player performance and development - Mo Monkton

Secretary - Margaret Smith

Trustee - Ray Smith

Funding - Shirley Hughes

Patron - Greg Harlow

Commonwealth Games

2002 Manchester CWG's saw bowls include a disability event for the first time alongside the

non-disabled event. It was also the first time that disabled bowlers had been treated as part of Team England. Sadly it was dropped from the following 2006 and 2010 games but thankfully was back in for the 2014 Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

It is now confirmed that the Para Bowls event will be included in future games up until at least 2030.

World Championships

The International governing Body for Bowls is now IBD (International Bowls for the Disabled)

They are responsible for staging IBD World Championships.

IBD was formed following the exclusion of Bowls from the Paralympic Games after the games in Atlanta 1996.

The venues provided for the Paralympic competitions often left a lot to be desired when being held in countries where bowls was not a national sport. In Atlanta for example, the competition was held on an Astro- turf practice hockey pitch.

In 2007 in Sydney Australia, the first World Championships under the new flag of 'International Bowls for the Disabled' (IBD) was held. IBD is recognized by WBB as the international governing body of disability bowls.

In order to make competitions for people with disabilities as fair as possible, a new classification system has been devised, a sports specific functional system consisting of 8 classifications. Classification exists in all disability sports, not just bowls.

There is still much to do but Disability Bowls is now moving in the right direction..