

Case Study:

Disability Sport NI Boccia Challenger



Summary of project

- Deliver a National-level competition in Northern Ireland, that gives NI athletes access to a competition without the usual associated costs of travelling.
- Ensure NI players have an opportunity to experience a competition where National-level rules are applied (i.e. call room, ball testing, Level 2+ referees)
- Use the World Boccia BCMS (licence purchased by Boccia UK) to ensure the smooth running of the event.
- Use the competition as an opportunity to upskill the NI Boccia Workforce (through Referee mentoring + time keeper training).
- Ensure that DSNi are in a position to deliver National-level events, i.e. UK Championships and Irish Championships, with an experienced volunteer and officials' workforce.
- Use the event as an opportunity to promote the sport by giving World Class Programme athletes an opportunity to compete in front of a home crowd.

2024

Target audience: Players, Officials & Volunteers within the UK Boccia Pathway

 Disability Sport NI
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 sport
Northern Ireland

Outcomes delivered

- 23 athletes competed
- 5 countries represented
- 2-day competition + 1 training day
- All matches overseen by Level 2+ referees
- Call-room applied for matches
- BCMS used for the competition draw + schedule

Who is better off and how

- Players involved in the competition had an opportunity outside of the UK Championships to compete against other Home Nation players and WCP players.
- Officials Development ran as part of the competition, giving 2 Officials the opportunity to have a Mentored game that contributes to their Level 2 Award.

Disability Sport NI Boccia Challenger



Disability Sport NI - Boccia

Challenges

- Limited availability of suitable venues in Northern Ireland, i.e. enough court space, Changing Places Facilities, proximity to accommodation.
- Sourcing suitably qualified officials – most officials travelled in from outside of Northern Ireland.
- Some travelling players withdrew from the competition due to travelling expenses.

The Challenger is a valuable opportunity to build experience of travelling to a formal, multi-day event and playing a wider field with fewer well-known faces. Thank you - already looking forward to next year!

Boccia England Squad player

Successes

- Positive feedback received from NI participants and travelling athletes.
- 4 NI players medalled, with a 5th making a semi-final.
- 3 new volunteers recruited for the event and trained as time keepers + refresher training for 3 other volunteers.
- 3 NI officials involved in refereeing games.

A fantastic event that brought our UK and Ireland boccia community together where everyone benefited from experiencing playing, coaching, officiating or simply being involved in a higher level of competition.

Scottish Disability Sport Official

Conclusions

- 7 NI players (including 2 WCP players) had the opportunity to take part in a National competition at Home.
- 2 x Level 1 referees were mentored.
- Profile of boccia in NI was increased through social media posts during the event.
- Delivering this event annually ensures NI is in a good position to host the UK Championships once per 4-year cycle.

Future Developments

- Look at other venue options – can be a trial for UK Championships venues.
- Continue to develop the NI Workforce to be less reliant on travelling officials from the rest of the UK.
- There is scope to deliver further workforce training opportunities along this competition in future years, i.e. Level 1 Officials or Classifier Training.