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Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship 2013

London 2012 Paralympic Legacy

Boccia - Classification, Competition and Club
Development in Norway, Portugal and Brazil

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a very exciting time for people involved with boccia. Boccia is a fast growing Paralympic sport with new national and international governing bodies - Boccia England and BISFed. Additionally, GB Boccia, for Britain's elite athletes, is also comparatively new. New organisations that are key to the progression of an increasingly popular sport are not without issues and this report examines some of those aspects.

My Fellowship, in Norway, Portugal and Brazil, researched three main areas of change, looking for model practice that can be applied in Britain:

- the procedures and rules for the classification of athletes;
- the development of clubs where boccia is played;
- national and international competition structure and competitive opportunity for athletes.

Information about the sport, the history of boccia around the world in its various forms and the current developments at national and international level are included in the report to help give some background as to why the sport is so important to people with severe disabilities. Many boccia athletes are unable to compete in any other sport.

The timing for the Fellowship was perfect, I had made many contacts whilst officiating at London 2012 and during the Fellowship I became Chair of Boccia England. Some of the good practice I've seen that is included in this report has already found its way onto the Board agenda for discussion and consideration.

It will be a challenge to achieve some of the recommendations. It is however, all possible. In summary, the recommendations are to:

- provide more competitive opportunity to a wider range of athletes;
- train and develop officials to national and international standards;
- organise more national and international competition;
- find and track players and clubs throughout the UK.

Links with the home nations, GB Boccia and BISFed are becoming stronger and BISFed will be a key force in all future changes. Sport England is now one of Boccia England's major funders and Boccia England has an efficient, hardworking (albeit small), staff team and an enthusiastic Board. There is every reason to be optimistic about improving future opportunities for disabled people who want to play boccia.

ITINERARY



NORWAY

30th May 2013 - 12th June 2013

I was based in Oslo at Norges Idrettsforbund (equivalent of the British Olympic and Paralympic Associations).

Visits and activities:

Alta	Regional competition	31st May - 2nd June
Tonsberg	Regional Disability Sports Exhibition and Activity day	4th June
Sognsvein	Team Norway BC 3 camp.	6th June
Honefloss	Regional competition.	8th June

Meetings:

National Boccia Manager, Ragnhild Mirza and other team members	3rd - 4th June
Boccia Governing Body Board Meeting	5th June
International Medical Classifier Dr Hedi Ann Birkeland	9th June



PORTUGAL

13th - 25th June 2013

National Classifiers Conference, Oporto .	13th - 15th June
European Championships, Guimaraes .	16th - 23rd June

Interviews and meetings during the championship:

- David Hadfield, President of BISFed and Chair of GB Boccia
- Joachim Viegas, Vice President of BISFed, Director of Paralisia Cerebral Associacao Nacional de Desporto (pcand) and Competition Organiser
- Elsa Mattee, Chief International Classifier
- Helena Bastos, Portugal Boccia Manager and coach
- Sandra King, Competition Technical Director
- Naomi Reilly, Ireland Boccia Manager

BISFed Board Meeting	24th June
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BRAZIL

9th - 27th November 2013

Rio de Janeiro

9th - 20th November

I was based in Rio City at ANDE, Associacao Nacional de Desporto Para Deficientes, (equivalent of Boccia England but with a governing body remit for other disability sports including football)

Visits:

14th - 15th November

- ANDEF Club;
- Rio 2016 site;
- Olympic and Paralympic Village.

Meetings and interviews in Rio de Janeiro:

13th November and 19th November:

- Ivaldo brandão Vieira, Vice President CPB - Comitê Paralímpico Brasileiro (Brazilian Paralympic Committee)
- Frederico Frazao, President of ANDE
- Erinaldo Pit Chagas, Director of ANDE and Rio 2016 Boccia Director, Comitê Paralímpico Brasileiro
- Claudio Diehl Nogheira, Brazil International Classifier

São Paulo

National Paralympic Schools Games 21st November - 28th November

Classification and Athlete Observations 23rd - 26th November

Meetings and interviews in Sao Paulo:

- Bernard Mexico, Events Manager, CPB 24th November
- Luciano Scheid, Competition Organiser, CPB 27th November
- Carlos Arthur Nuzman,
President of Brazilian Paralympic Committee (CPB)
and other officials 27th November

INTRODUCTION

Aims of the Fellowship

Though boccia has been around for centuries (see History below) it has become a popular Paralympic sport comparatively recently in Britain. Cerebral Palsy Sport www.cpsport.org did all the groundwork in enabling severely disabled people to play boccia (and many other sports) and the interest generated during London 2012 has made the sport one of the fastest growing in the country. However, Boccia England as an organisation was founded as recently as 2011 and it was only given governing body status in January 2013.

This Fellowship allowed me to research the demands of this growing international sport in three main areas :

- classification of athletes;
- club development;
- competition structure and competitive opportunity.

I travelled to Norway, Portugal and Brazil with the intention of bringing good practice into Britain via the four main agents for change :

- Boccia England;
- the GB Boccia Federation (GBBF), which includes all the home nations;
- GB Boccia, which is responsible for GB elite athletes and GB's paralympic success;
- BISFed, the international governing body.

What is Boccia? (pronounced Bot-cha)

Boccia, sometimes referred to as Bocce, is a Paralympic sport played by over 50 countries at competitive level and many others as a leisure activity.

A target sport, similar to bowls or petanque, boccia is played sitting down and can be played by anyone, regardless of the level of disability (including visual impairment); age; gender and all other protected characteristics. Many competitions at club, regional and national level worldwide also include non-disabled athletes. At team competitions, disabled and non-disabled athletes will play competitively with and against each other.

The game is based on a simple idea. One side has six red balls and the other six blue balls. The aim is to get balls closest to the white target ball, the 'jack', than the opposition.

A match consists of a set number of ends, four in Individual and Pairs events and six in the Team game. Players can release (see photo below), throw, or kick boccia balls. The first ball is always the jack. To start an "end" one side will play the jack. It can be thrown anywhere on court over a line marked out in front of the players called the 'V' line. They then propel their first ball towards the white jack, trying to get it as close as possible. The other side then attempts to get their ball closer. After that, the side whose ball is not closest to the jack plays the next ball.

Points are awarded once all balls have been played. The side that is closest to the jack receives one point for every ball they have played that is nearer than their opponent's closest ball. The winner is the side with the highest score after all the ends have been played.

Boccia is played indoors on a court similar in size to a badminton court. The balls are usually made of leather and are filled with granules to allow them to roll, but not bounce.

Boccia is unique. There is no Olympic equivalent and there are no age or gender classifications.

There are four classifications within boccia - BC 1, BC2, BC3 and BC 4.



BC3 athletes play with an assistant. This is Cecelia Turk, International BC3 athlete, with her assistant.

The assistant is exactly that, an assistant. They are not allowed to look into the court, communicate with the athlete, or be involved with play in any respect. Failure of the assistant to adhere to the rules can result in the athlete's disqualification and will always lead to penalties being given. However, the assistants are usually very skilled; for the first time at London 2012, assistants to medal winning BC3 athletes were also presented with medals

The modern game originated partly in the UK (see History below) to enable people with Cerebral Palsy (CP) to have competitive sporting opportunity.

See <https://bocciaengland.org.uk> for more information.

Bit of ancient and more recent history

Britain can be very proud of its history of disability sport.

The Paralympics were born in Britain in 1948 thanks to the pioneering work of Dr Ludwig Guttmann at Stoke Mandeville Hospital (see www.stokemandevillestadium.co.uk/about-us/history).

Boccia became part of the Paralympics in 1984.

If we believe Wikipedia, variations of boccia have been around for several millennia, played seated or standing, it was probably played originally by Egyptians, Greeks and Romans :

"As early as 5000 B.C. the Egyptians played a form of boccia with polished rocks. Graphic representations of figures tossing a ball or polished stone have been recorded from 5200 B.C. While boccia today looks quite different from its early predecessors, the unbroken thread of boccia's lineage is the consistently common objective of trying to come as close to a fixed target as possible. From this early objective, the basic rules of boccia were born. From Egypt the game made its way to Greece around 800 B.C. The Romans learned the game from the Greeks, then introduced it throughout the empire. The Roman influence in boccia is preserved in the game's name; boccia derives from the Vulgate Latin bottia, meaning boss.

The early Romans were among the first to play a game resembling what we know as boccia today. In early times they used coconuts brought back from Africa and later used hard olive wood to carve out boccia balls. Beginning with Emperor Augustus, boccia became the sport of statesman and rulers.

As the game enjoyed rapid growth throughout Europe, being the sport of nobility and peasants alike, it began to threaten with the health of nations. The popularity of the game was said to interfere with the security of the state because it took too much time away from archery practice and other

military exercises. Consequently, Kings Carlos IV and V prohibited the playing of boccia.

In 1576, the Republic of Venice publicly condemned the sport, punishing those who played with fines and imprisonment. And perhaps most grave was the condemnation by the Catholic Church, which deterred the laity and officially prohibited clergyman from playing the game by proclaiming boccia a means of gambling.

Contrary to the rest of Europe, the great game of balls thrived in Great Britain. Such nobility as Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Francis Drake were avid fans. According to legend, Sir Frances Drake refused to set out to defend England against the Spanish Armada until he finished a game. He proclaimed, "First we finish the game, then we'll deal with the Armada!"

In modern times, the first boccia clubs were organized in Italy. Notably the first Italian League was formed in 1947 by fifteen teams in and around the town of Rivoli (Torino). 1947 also marks the beginning of the Boccia World Championships.

Enjoy the world's oldest sport, a sport known to revive the body and mind, and next to football, the most popular game in the world."

Boccia Now

Boccia is a growing sport. Its popularity in Britain has been recognised by Sport England, which fund the governing body - Boccia England, and by UK Sport, which fund GB Boccia's elite national athletes.

Boccia England is responsible for the England Team and the grassroots development of thousands of athletes in all areas of leisure opportunity and competition.

BISFed (Boccia International Sports Federation) is the international governing body

All of the above are new organisations. During the Fellowship, members of all the above groups, plus the equivalents in Norway, Portugal and Brazil, were visited and interviewed to get a clear picture of what works well in other countries and what could work better in the UK.

KEY ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVITIES VISITED

NORWAY

Structure

The National Boccia Manager, Ragnhild Mirza, my main contact, was knowledgeable, informative and very happy to help during my visit, which was peppered with social events involving officials, volunteers and athletes, to enable me to understand the boccia structure in Norway.

The structure is not equivalent to anything in Britain, as in Norway all sports are governed by the Norges Idrettsforbund which forms both national Olympic and Paralympic Committees. Ragnhild's post is unique, as Boccia has no Olympic equivalent, so she is responsible to a governing body for one disability sport only. This seems to have both strengths and weaknesses; it strengthens her role as she has a high level of autonomy, but it can also be difficult to get recognition in the organisation because boccia is competing with popular national winter sports such as skiing and football.

Classification and competition

Alta Regional Competition

I had never experienced the midnight sun, so the first visit of the Fellowship in June, to a regional competition in Alta, inside the Arctic Circle, was a joy. The competition began with classification of the athletes. The classification panel was made up of a technical classifier and a physiotherapist. A third official member of the panel, a GP from Oslo, sent apologies. As a newly qualified national classifier from England I was allowed to observe. Alta is not a large town and it doesn't have extensive leisure facilities. Though the centre was large enough for several full size boccia courts there were no separate rooms, so the athletes were examined and classified in a corner of the sports hall behind seating. This arrangement was surprisingly private, comfortable and respectful to the athletes, many of whom were elderly. Not a model arrangement, but it worked well. The procedure involved reading medical information that the athlete presented, some formal hands on examination, questions and discussion and watching the athlete propel a ball. The athlete was then observed playing during the competition to confirm the classification. This ensures fairness by helping to prevent cheating, but also ensures that the

athlete's functional ability is not affected by competitive play. For example, athletes may appear to be behaving differently during competition to the way they presented themselves at the classification.

Boccia England uses BISFed's BC 1 - 4 or Unclassified, in all competition, whereas Norway has its own Klassifiseringsmanual. This means that the Boccia Board of Norges Idrettsforbund follow their own classification rules for athletes outside of the BC1-4 classification used for international athletes. This allows many more people with mild disabilities (mostly older



people), to play within classifications and allows the rules to be tweaked to give players in some classifications the option of playing standing up. The approach is such a way of life in Norwegian boccia, that when I attended the governing body board meeting, the directors were surprised to discover that prior to my visit, I had never seen boccia played by athletes standing up, or heard of the Norwegian classification.

There are also additional Scandinavian classification rules. The Swedish Team Manager explained these to me a few weeks later during the classification course in Portugal.

It seems very confusing to me for Governing Bodies and National Managers to have several different classification schemes to operate, but it does ensure a wider range of competitive opportunity for non BC 1 - 4 athletes. In the UK there is evidence that older people are playing boccia in church halls and residential homes, but we don't know how many or where. In Norway there is a much clearer idea of this because of the level of competition available.

Honefloss, Ringerike Regional competition

My attendance here was another treat. Home-made regional cakes and hot drinks were served, then the competition was opened by the local Mayor. This was followed by a brass band, mostly people with learning disabilities, playing the National Anthem and "Rock around the Clock".

The classification panel was made up of a GP, a radiographer, an occupational therapist and me. Once again I was observing as a recently qualified national classifier. The classifiers had flown in from different

parts of the country but had worked together several times before and followed a strict regime. 28 athletes were to be classified. In England this would usually be done prior to the competition to allow the athlete to compete immediately in the new or confirmed classification, but in Norway it is done in parallel and continues throughout the day. The athletes play in their original classifications and if changed, play in the new one at the next opportunity. Athletes came from a wide geographical area to compete and be classified and several athletes attended only for classification.

In Norway, Classifiers are paid. All athletes pay a set fee for the classification and the money collected is shared out between the panel at the end of the day.

The panel had a separate room and followed the same model as described earlier.

Clubs

Norway has 76 clubs, the National Manager is in touch with all of them, validates and accredits some of them, knows how many people attend and encourages them to go to the competitions organised by Norges Idrettsforbund. It is unusual to have this precise information. Most governing bodies are unsure where their sport is being played. Boccia England for example, has a process of accrediting and validating clubs, but many clubs meet, play each other, don't attend competitions, are self-funding and don't need outside involvement.

Further confusion arises in most countries, with multisport clubs, after school clubs, activities in older people's residential homes or leisure activities, which may, or may not, be playing boccia.

Marketing

Though publicity and marketing wasn't a major part of this Fellowship, it is of interest to Boccia England and it is an area in which Norges Idrettsforbund excel. It is a comparatively wealthy organisation and has a good artistic and marketing section that spends time doing art work and discussing promotions with internal clients. Some of the designs of the literature and displays around the HQ building are stunning - and completely taken for granted by the staff. The National Boccia Manager has access to expertise of which governing bodies of disability sport in the UK can only dream. Perhaps the excellent publicity is partly responsible for the availability of accurate statistics of players and the good contact with

clubs, i.e. because of good marketing, Norwegian boccia players know that there is a governing body that they can access for advice and help.

PORTUGAL

The primary reasons for visiting Portugal were to visit the European championships managed by Joachaim Viegas, the Vice Chair of BISFed, the international governing body and to attend a Classification course run by the Chief International Classifier, Elsa Mattee.

Classification

The classifiers training conference in Oporto, led by Elsa Mattee, International Chief Classifier, was excellent. Classification is a vital process to achieving fairness and equality within disability sport and Elsa is trying to ensure that the classification rules are applied consistently throughout the world. The course attracted national classifier technical and medical delegates from all over Europe, including Turkey and Russia. As well as promoting good practice, it highlighted the inconsistencies in current practice and inexperience and lack of knowledge in many of the countries represented.

All delegates were expected to do a "practicum" and observations of athletes during the following 8 day championship in Guimaraes. It was obvious when speaking to other delegates during this process that there are misunderstandings about how to become a national or international classifier. The situation is not helped by an on line classifiers course that was offered by the previous international governing body until 2011 that is now not recognized by BISFed. The Chief Classifier is aware of the international issues, but has little control over what happens in national governing bodies.

A new classification, BC5, was discussed at length. All delegates wanted to see this category included in future international classification, as we had all had the experience of re-classifying a BC2 athlete as "unclassified", which means that the athlete's progression to elite level ends abruptly at that point. This can be devastating for an ambitious boccia player as they are unable to play internationally unless they are classified as BC1 -BC4. Though in theory, athletes who do not match BC2 classification can take part in other Paralympic sports to elite level, in practice, this doesn't often

happen. The additional BC5 classification would allow talented, unclassified players to remain at an elite level in the sport.

Athletes can still play boccia competitively to national level without a BC1-4 classification and many players are happy to do this, but for some highly skilled players it isn't enough.

A new classification of BC5 will be a long process, as even if agreed by BISFed and the IPC, it is unlikely to be part of the Paralympics before 2024.

Competition

The European Championship is an important event in the international calendar, yet the economic situation was such in 2012/2013 that few countries bid to BISFed to host it.



Portugal won the bids, but the project team found it a constant battle to obtain sufficient funds.

Despite this, the competition was enjoyable and successful, attracting teams from all over Europe; Russia and Turkey sent a delegation for the first time.

The city of Guimaraes is a World Heritage site with a national reputation for supporting sports activity; a great backdrop for a European Championship.

All of my interviews and discussions about competitive opportunity pointed to the need for more international competition. This is difficult when funding is short, but essential to seed athletes and give world rankings. BISFed held a well-attended open meeting during the championships and indicated that work is ongoing to increase competition. However, this will be a slow progression. Open, friendly international competition organised by national governing bodies will help to expand the programme of competition.

Clubs

Portugal has a long history of boccia development and of organising competitions. The governing body, PCAND, has only 2.5 full time staff, yet it supports all BC 1 - 4 athletes and over 1000 students playing in the pan disability league. It is in partnership with several government departments and organises many regional and national competitions. There are also key staff in other areas, e.g. the Department of Education has a boccia officer working on an interesting project relating to obesity in students.

There are some boccia clubs, but mostly the clubs are multisport and adapted sports clubs. Interestingly, as in Norway, there are also some clubs for people aged 60+ where the rules have been adapted to allow faster play, this includes playing standing up.



BRAZIL

Rio de Janeiro is the venue of the 2016 Paralympics, so it was a privilege to be involved with the Comitê Paralímpico Brasileiro (Brazilian Paralympic Committee BPC). My main contact, Erinaldo Pit Chagas is the Director of ANDE, the Brazilian governing body for boccia and disability football. Erinaldo is also part of the Sports Department of the BPC and is leading on boccia at Rio 2016. Additionally, the President of ANDE is also the Vice President of the BPC, so I was in a good position to learn about all levels of disability sport in Brazil.

There was a problem with language in Rio that wasn't evident in any other city I visited during the Fellowship. My recently learnt and very limited Portuguese wasn't much use in Brazil, as Brazilian Portuguese is the main language; even in Rio de Janeiro, the capital, very few people speak English. This is an acknowledged issue for the Rio 2016 committee - part of the planning for Rio 2016 includes basic English lessons to thousands of volunteers and officials.

Clubs

There are hundreds of boccia and multisport clubs throughout Brazil and ANDE estimate that there are well over 5000 athletes regularly playing organised boccia. As with most countries, governing bodies find it very difficult to find out who is playing the sport and where they are playing.



The clubs I visited were attached to special schools that also appeared to be community centres as many disabled adults were also present, playing a variety of sports and enjoying horse riding. Some of the visitors (see photo) were international athletes, practicing boccia skills on small scale courts.

Though there was no time to visit a Special Olympics club (for people with learning disabilities), ANDE also has a long tradition of working with the Brazil Special Olympics Movement www.specialolympics.org - a partnership that has only just begun in England.

It is hard to work out how Brazilian boccia has achieved success in terms of the numbers of people playing boccia, but it is probably due to several factors; the Brazilians culture and love of sport, Rio 2016 planning and investment and most importantly, a pattern of consistent sustained development over many years that is only just beginning in Britain as part of the London 2012 Legacy.

ANDE has also invested heavily in the development of boccia officials and claim to have 6 active, international classifiers, 20 active international referees and "dozens" of national referees and classifiers. For comparison, the UK has one recently qualified international classifier and 5 active international referees.

SAO PAULO

Competition

National Paralympic Schools Games
Paralimpiadas Escolares 2013

The cost of this annual competition, including 27 regionals (one in each state), is over £200,000, the bulk of the funding comes from the wealthy Sao Paulo state government. Over 2000 pan disability athletes compete in 8 different sports with invited international guests, (GB sent a delegation of

boccia, football, and swimming teams). Each state can send up to 8 male and 8 female athletes for each sport. The athletes compete in 2 different age groups, 12 - 15 years and 16 - 21 years. The main accommodation was in the Holiday Inn and much of the adjoining conference centre was also booked for the 10 days. The opening ceremony featured well known Brazilian artists and the competition is definitely a highlight of the boccia year. The other countries I visited, Norway and Portugal, have school competitions, but nothing on this scale. Interestingly though, in terms of numbers competing in boccia, Boccia England's Lords Taverner's schools league, supports an equivalent number of boccia athletes and Portugal's schools competitions would probably also match the numbers.

There was some confusion over competition dates, especially the boccia, which started a day later than expected and finished a day earlier. The courts were smaller than the standard boccia court size, which is nearer to a badminton court in measurements. I had already witnessed practice on small courts at the clubs in Rio, but I was surprised to see them in a national competition.

During the competition the organisational team were extremely professional, officials were mostly international referees and classifiers and of course, the young people had a fabulous time.

Classification

This was an enormous task with so many athletes involved, over 60 to be classified in boccia and football and due to last for 3 days, plus 2 days of observations. I was assigned to the team led by the international boccia and football classifier that I met in Rio. There were 8 medical and technical classifiers, classifying footballers and boccia players, sometimes more than one of each, in the same room at the same time, plus team managers, coaches and administration and other technical staff coming in and out of the room with paperwork. Additionally, footballers are examined wearing as few clothes as possible, so were dressing and undressing, they are also often required to walk, run and kick and boccia players need to propel boccia balls. It is unlikely that this busy scenario would exist in Norway, Portugal or the UK. However, the outwardly chaotic looking sessions were well controlled by the team. Despite the time scales, the lead classifier stopped all classification on several occasions to do a roundup of where we were, i.e. how many athletes had been classified, how many were still to be seen, what had changed and to find out whether further discussion was needed on any areas.

All paperwork was hand written with a small team of administrative staff just outside the room, scanning the information into the athletes' files to establish a national classification database.

The lead classifier uses one A4 classification form similar to those used by other countries visited. It is based on the information needed by the International Chief Classifier, though there are plans to expand the information in Brazil to record more detailed medical information.

Visually Impaired Boccia Athletes

Boccia England has developed a National Championship for visually impaired athletes, where athletes use a specially adapted grid and have a sighted assistant when playing. Brazil is the only country I have liaised with that may also have VI boccia. It is not part of ANDE (the governing body), as in England, but seems to be run in the south of the country by a charity. It was not possible to get any more information about this whilst in Brazil, but it is worth mentioning, as if this aspect of the sport continues to develop in the UK there could be possible future international links with Brazil in this area of boccia.

CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Competition

1. *More competition at national and international level*

Athletes need good quality competition to improve game play and skills and officials need it to gain experience, improve skills and meet and model themselves on more experienced officials. Not enough competition will lead to overbooking, especially internationally.

BISfed and Boccia England must continue to extend competitive opportunities and seek a fair system that gives equal opportunity to all wanting to compete.

2. Increase participation

We must acknowledge that not all players want to be competitive, but formal competition increases playing opportunities for all athletes. In Norway including older athletes with mild disabilities into the Klassifiseringsmanual has expanded sporting opportunity for all players by increasing the number of local clubs; ANDE in Brazil has increased competitive participation by partnering with the Special Olympic movement; V.I. Boccia is a new, growing area of the sport in England and possibly Brazil and BISFed may formally introduce a new classification of BC5 in the near future, so as soon as a clear picture of a BC5 athlete emerges, BC5 competition could begin.

Boccia England should investigate extending opportunities offered for competitive participation to wider groups of players, nationally and internationally.

Classification

- 3. A new classification for BC5 athletes will extend international opportunities for new and unclassified boccia athletes*

BISFed are addressing this internationally. Boccia England should consider additional opportunities for talented BC5s as soon as possible

- 4. Clear national progression for classifiers up to international standard*

Good classifiers improve with experience when the international rules and procedures are being applied in a standardised way.

Boccia England should continue the programme of national classification, with reference to the Chief International Classifier.

- 5. More classifiers and international classifiers at the required standard are needed*

BISFED to continue work on establishing a pathway for national classifiers to obtain international experience and become international classifiers.

Boccia England to support BISFed's work and continue to train and develop national classifiers.

Clubs

- 6. In Britain we need to obtain a clearer idea of who is playing boccia and where, to ensure that we can help club development and increase opportunities for athletes*

This is not as easy as it sounds, but worldwide it seems, we need a better system for counting and tracking people playing boccia, whether in known or accredited boccia clubs, or other leisure areas such as older people's homes or after school multi sports clubs.

Boccia England should continue carefully recording information as it emerges, look out for model practice to improve the statistics and continue to invest in club development.

Official's development

- 7. Good quality, accredited, regular training and continuing professional development for officials, whether volunteers or not, is essential at all levels of the sport.*

BISFed should set the standards of training and development for classifiers and referees and ensure that they are maintained via national governing bodies.

Boccia England should continue with CPD for all officials.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

During the Fellowship I was elected to the Chair of the Boccia England Board. This has helped to get many of the above recommendations onto the national agenda. Work will continue throughout the duration of the current 4 year planning cycle and hopefully, with additional government funding and support, to 2020.

Further information sources – all accessed in March 2014

History of boccia:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boccia

Supporting information from [Rico Daniele](#) and Jeanne Huber in *This Old House* Spring 1998.

Governing bodies:

- Boccia England

<https://bocciaengland.org.uk>

- BISFed

www.bisfed.com

- Norway

www.fleridrett.no

- Portugal

www.pcand.pt/boccia

- Brazil

ANDE (Associação Nacional de Desporto Para Deficientes):

www.ande.org.br

UK Sport

www.uk sport.gov.uk

GB Boccia

www.gb-boccia.org

Cerebral Palsy CP Sport

www.cpsport.org

British Paralympic Association:

www.paralympics.org.uk/games

Special Olympics:

www.specialolympics.org

Stoke Mandeville Hospital:

www.stokemandevillestadium.co.uk/about-us/history/

Keywords

Sport
Boccia
Clubs
Competition
Classification
Disability

And Finally...

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