



British Dodgeball Three Ball Rules

The British Dodgeball Three Ball Rules are designed for beginner and junior level play. They are aligned with and written as a stepping stone towards the British Dodgeball Five Ball Rules, made even more accessible to beginners and junior age groups.

British Dodgeball has three junior age groups in 2017/18. Where rules differ from age group to age group this is clearly stated in the rules below. The age groups are as follows:

- 1) Under 11s
 - 2) Under 13s
 - 3) Under 16s
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1. The Court: The 3 ball dodgeball court (u13s and u16s)

- 1) For under 13s, under 16s, and adults, a British Dodgeball “3 ball court” should be used. The official 3 ball dodgeball court size is 8m wide and between 16m-17m lengthways. Where possible there will be at least 1m of space outside of the court between the court and any wall or hard object.
- 2) Unless playing wall-to-wall, the “back line” of the dodgeball court at each end will be a marked line on the court floor.
- 3) A “centre line” will be marked across the court at exactly halfway between the back lines (or walls if playing wall to wall).
 - a. Markings are recommended at 2m, 4m and 6m along the centre line to indicate where the three balls should be placed at the start of play.
 - b. “Contested ball lines” are recommended 0.3m either side of the centre line for the central ball, indicating to runners an area that they must not enter.
- 4) A “neutral zone” will be marked with 1.5m total width, by lines that are 0.75m either side of the centre line. These two lines will be called the “neutral zone lines”. Players from both teams are allowed in the neutral zone, but are not allowed on or over the furthest neutral zone line.
- 5) A “player return area” will be marked for each team between 1 and 2 metres away from the court (both teams’ areas will be on the left side of their half of the court). This area will be 1m by 4m and is reserved for one team coach where applicable, plus any players who are “out”.
- 6) A “ball return line” will be marked on each side of the court, 5.5m away from the centre line.
- 7) For matches not played wall-to-wall, the outside court lines and any back walls or boundaries are not part of the playing court. Therefore, touching these or any surfaces beyond these with any body part at any time during normal play beyond the “opening rush” will result in an “out” for the offending player. When the court is wall-to-wall, the back walls are considered part of the court.



- 8) Where possible a net, barrier, or other hard surface will surround the court, approximately 2.5 metres from the outside court line.
- 9) Where a court is wall-to-wall, a player return line will be marked with a dash 1m from the back of the court, to signify the point behind which players must enter the court when returning to play.
- 10) During match play, only a team's 6 designated players for that period, and coach, are allowed inside these nets/ barriers/ surfaces.

2. The Court: The U11s Dodgeball Court

- 1) For under 11s, the recommended court size is equivalent to a standard badminton court, and therefore the outside badminton lines should be used as outside court lines. A standard badminton court is approximately 13.4m x 6m.
- 2) Where possible there will be at least 1m of space outside of the court between the court and any wall or hard object. Unless playing wall-to-wall, the "back line" of the dodgeball court at each end will be a marked line on the court floor.
- 3) A "centre line" will be marked across the court at exactly halfway between the back lines (or walls if playing wall to wall).
 - a. Markings are recommended at 1.5m, 3m and 4.5m along the centre line to indicate where the three balls should be placed at the start of play.
 - b. "Contested ball lines" are recommended 0.3m either side of the centre line for the central ball, indicating to runners an area that they must not enter.
- 4) A "neutral zone" will be marked with 1.5m total width, by lines that are 0.75m either side of the centre line. These two lines will be called the "neutral zone lines". Players from both teams are allowed in the neutral zone, but are not allowed on or over the furthest neutral zone line.
- 5) A "player return area" will be marked for each team between 1 and 2 metres away from the court (both teams' areas will be on the left side of their half of the court). This area will be 1m by 4m and is reserved for one team coach where applicable, plus any players who are "out".
- 6) A "return line" will be marked on each side of the court, 5.5m away from the centre line. This signifies the point behind which a ball must return beyond once live at the beginning of play and behind which players must enter the court when returning to play.
- 7) For matches not played wall-to-wall, the outside court lines and any back walls or boundaries are not part of the playing court. Therefore, touching these or any surfaces beyond these with any body part at any time during normal play beyond the "opening rush" will result in an "out" for the offending player. When the court is wall-to-wall, the back walls are considered part of the court.



- 8) Where possible a net, barrier, or other hard surface will surround the court, approximately 2.5 metres from the outside court line.
- 9) During match play, only a team's 6 designated players for that period, and coach, are allowed inside these nets/ barriers/ surfaces.

3. Coaches

- 1) Across all age groups, each team is encouraged to have one designated coach over the age of 16. The coach should remain inside their "player return area" at all times during play and should not interfere with any dodgeballs.

4. Equipment and Clothing

- 1) Across all age groups, 3 British Dodgeball approved dodgeballs will be used in each match.
 - a. For under 11 competitions, size 1 foam dodgeballs will be used.
 - b. For under 13 competitions, size 2 (6 inch) cloth dodgeballs will be used.
 - c. For under 16 and adult competitions, size 3 (7 inch) cloth dodgeballs will be used
- 2) Uniform and protective equipment are considered to be part of the player. Any player hit on any part of their uniform or protective equipment will be considered "out".
- 3) All players competing in the same team in 3 ball events should wear tops of the same colour.
- 4) For health and safety reasons the following rules around equipment and clothing apply. Any injuries resulting from the use of particular equipment or clothing are the responsibility of the player who wears them.
 - a) All footwear worn should be suitable for dodgeball and should be non-marking.
 - b) Unsecured headgear such as ball caps and visors may not be worn during tournament play.
 - c) Prosthetics may be worn. All casts, braces, and splints with exposed hard surfaces must be padded.
 - d) Jewellery is strictly not to be worn by players during competition unless suitably secured with tape. Plastic watches are permitted. Officials will ask players to remove any items they believe contravene these rules or to suitably secure them with tape.
 - e) It is recommended that spectacles should not be worn by players during competition, unless secured by a strap.



4. Match formats and scoring

- 1) Across all age groups, all teams should have 6 players on court at the start of each period. Teams must have a minimum of 4 players on court in order to compete- otherwise the match will be forfeited.
- 2) Across all age groups, matches will usually consist of two halves of 6 minutes separated by a 2 minute interval. The 6 minutes for each half will be a running clock, i.e. 6 minutes without pausing. The referee will stop play and thus pause the time when a health and safety concern arises.
- 3) If less than 30 seconds remain of a match after a set or reset is completed, a final 30 second set will be played.
- 4) A match will consist of an indeterminate number of periods, where a period is when the two teams line up to start play with 6 players and they play until either one team is eliminated, or until the time for that period expires. The maximum time allowed for each period is 2 minutes of continuous play.
- 5) All teams may have a squad of up to a maximum of 12 players at each event. Players may only be substituted between periods.
- 6) Teams will change ends at the start of each new half.
- 7) A team wins a period (and the next period begins) by getting all of the players on the opposing team out, or by having more players left on the court ("players on") when the referee signals the end of the period. A period is drawn if the number of players left on court when the referee signals the end of the period is equal for both teams.
- 8) Once a period ends (due to a team being eliminated, or time expiring), teams must then re-set immediately for the next period. A maximum of 20 seconds should be allowed for re-set.
- 9) The winning team is awarded 2 points towards their match score on completion of a period. Where a period is drawn, both teams are awarded 1 point.
- 10) A team wins a match if they have more points than the opposition at the end of the match.
- 11) In league tables or group tables, 2 match points will be awarded for a match win, 1 match point for a match draw, and 0 match points for a match loss.
- 12) Where teams finish level on points at the end of all matches in any competition, the team who has won more matches will be placed higher. Where there is still a tie, the following criteria will then be considered in this order:
 - The team with the most periods won will be placed higher.
 - The team with the highest total "players on" from the end of each period of all matches will be placed higher.
 - The team with the highest total points from any head-to-head matches will be placed higher.



- The team with the highest total “players on” from any head-to-head matches will be placed higher.
 - If two teams are still equally placed, a two minute period will be played (followed by “overtime” and “sudden death” if necessary), with the winner taking the higher position.
- 13)) In knockout or playoff matches, a drawn match is resolved by playing an overtime set which will last for one minute. Teams will start “overtime” with 6 players, and the team with the most players on court at the end of this one minute set will be declared the winner.
- 14) If a knockout match is still drawn at the end of the one minute overtime period (both teams have an equal number of players on court), the referee will not stop the game but will shout “sudden death” to inform both teams that the one minute overtime period has expired. In “sudden death” overtime, the next team to eliminate an opposing player will be declared the winning team. All standard rules apply during sudden death circumstances.
- 15) Teams must be ready to start a period when called by the referee. There is no allocated break between periods.
- 16) The team designated as the “Home” team will choose which end of the court they will play the first period. The “Home” team will be decided by a coin toss before each match.

5. The start of play

- 1) A referee will signal the start of a period using a whistle or other pre-specified sound. They will initially call for teams to “line up”, instruct all player to be “ready”, and then signal the start of the period.
- 2) Where there is at least 1m between the back line and any wall or hard object, all players must be positioned behind their team’s back line at the start of each period. Players may touch the back line as this is not part of the court.
- 3) Where there is less than 1m between the back line and any wall or hard object, all players should start fully on court at the start of each period, with at least one foot in contact with the back line.
- 4) Three balls will be placed equally spaced apart in the neutral zone, on the “centre line”, before the start of each period.
- 5) The section at the beginning of each period or reset is referred to as the “rush”. Upon the official’s signal, both teams rush to the centre of the court and attempt to retrieve their left-most ball (the one ball designated for their team), and also to compete for the one ball in the middle (which is open to either team).
- 6) A maximum of 2 players per team are allowed to rush for the balls. There is no limit to the number of balls any individual player may rush for. Any players who are not rushing must step onto the court at the start of the period before the first rusher from either team reaches the centre line.



- 7) When rushing for their designated ball, players are not allowed to touch or step over the opponent's neutral zone line. Any contraventions to this rule will result in the offending player being called "out".
- 8) For the centre, contested ball, contested ball lines are recommended to be marked on the court either side of the centre line.
 - a) Where contested ball lines are in place, the area between these is called the "contested ball zone". Any player competing for these balls may only place hands and forearms into the contested ball zone. If any other body part touches the centre zone, including the centre zone lines, the player is called "out".
 - b) Where contested ball lines are not used, the competing player is not permitted to touch or cross the centre line with any part of their body. Any contravention to this will be called "out".
- 9) Players may not slide or dive head first towards the centre line of the court when rushing to gain possession of a ball on the centre line. Any offending players will be called "out".
- 10) No deliberate physical contact between players is allowed. This includes pushing, grabbing and leaning on an opposition player, and will result in the offending player being called "out". Incidental contact when competing for the centre ball will not be penalised.
- 11) If two players both have hold of the central ball they may choose to both keep hold of it and try to gain possession, as long as they do not initiate intentional physical contact. If either player is pulled over the centre line, this player will be called "out" so long as the pulling player has not initiated intentional and avoidable physical contact.
- 12) No dodgeball may be thrown at an opponent until it had passed behind the ball return line (or "return line" in U11s). The ball may pass behind this return line by (known as "making a ball live"):
 - a. The player who wins the ball carrying the ball backwards and making contact with the floor behind the ball return line (both feet fully behind the ball return line).
 - b. Another player receiving the ball whilst with two feet in contact with the floor behind the ball return line.
- 13) If a ball that has not passed behind the ball return line is thrown, any hits made with that throw are void as it is a dead ball.
- 14) The ball designated for the opposing team may be collected, if still available, as soon as both of a team's own designated dodgeballs have been made live.



6. False Starts

- 1) Players should be stationary following the call from the referee to be “ready”. If a player moves towards the centre line before any signal, this is a false start.
- 2) A “false start warning” is received by any player or players who commit a false start and continue to compete for the balls during the opening rush (if they advance past the ball return line or return line in U11s). If a false start warning is issued, the period will be re-started. If a team receives two false start warnings, they will no longer be allowed to compete for the middle ball during that period.

7. Retrievers and recovering dodgeballs

- 1) Events will be played “with retrievers” or “without retrievers”. Retrievers are individuals designated to retrieve balls that go out of play. U11, U13 and U16 events will usually be played “without retrievers”.
- 3) In events or matches “without retrievers”, “in” and “out” players are permitted to recover dodgeballs from off the court if they notify the referees that they are doing so by raising one hand above their head and keeping their hand raised until they have left the court (for “in” players) or the player out area (for “out” players). “In” players must leave and re-enter the court behind the player return line (“return line” in U11 events).
- 4) When recovering dodgeballs from off the court, players must not go beyond the centre zone line which marks the team’s half of the court.
- 5) It is recommended that an “in” player recovering a ball from off court passes that ball back onto the court to a team-mate before returning to court. This ball must be received by a player who has both feet behind the ball return line (“return line” in U11 events) before it can be thrown.
- 6) “In” players leaving the court will remain a live target until the moment any part of their body is in contact with a court boundary line or a surface outside the boundaries of the court. They become a target again as soon as they are fully inside the court boundaries. They must not delay returning to court in order to dodge, or leave court in order to dodge.
- 7) Where a match is played “with retrievers”, no active players, whether “in” or “out”, may go out of the court or player return area during a period.
- 8) Retrievers may not enter the court at any time and should wear jerseys of a different colour to their team. Matches with retrievers are usually played with two retrievers per team.
- 9) Retrievers recovering dodgeballs must not go beyond the centre zone line which marks the team’s half of the court. They should return balls into play as quickly as possible, either by placing the ball behind the “ball return line” (return line in U11 events), passing the ball onto their side of the court to an active player. A ball must be received by a player who has both feet behind the ball return line (“return line” in U11 events) before it can be thrown.



8. Exiting the Court

- 1) An exiting player is a player who has been deemed “out” by the referee and is in the process of leaving the court.
- 2) Any player who has been hit and is obviously not attempting to or has failed to catch the deflected ball is also classed as an exiting player.
 - a. Where a player has been “hit” and is attempting to catch the deflected ball, subsequent plays made against that player are resolved as follows:
 - i. The player may be hit and deemed out by additional throws.
 - ii. Catches made by the player are void, unless the player first catches the deflected ball, saving themselves from being out.
 - iii. A “hit” player is not permitted to do anything to try to eliminate the opposition unless they have first caught the deflection. All throws made by the player between the deflection and catch of the deflected ball are void.
- 3) Upon being deemed “out”, a player should raise both hands above their heads to signal that they are out and should no longer be a target. An exiting player should leave the court without interfering with play as quickly as possible and join the back of the queue of out players in the player return area.
- 4) Any ball that hits an out or exiting player is generally considered to be a “live” ball. Therefore a ball that has hit an out or exiting player which hasn’t been intentionally deflected by that player, and hasn’t been deliberately thrown at the out or exiting player, can be caught or can hit other players out.
 - a. If an out or exiting player deliberately interferes with or deflects any live ball, no catches can be made by their teammates on that live ball.
 - b. Opposition players should not deliberately throw at exiting players. If the referee feels a player has deliberately thrown at an exiting player, the ball will become “dead” as soon as it hits the exiting player.

9. Returning to the Court

- 1) A returning player is a player who was “out” and in the player return area, and is returning to play. They must re-enter the court behind the player return line, or they may be called “out”.
- 2) Players must return to play in the order in which they were “out”. Any violation of this rule will result in the offending player being immediately called “out”, and the player who should have returned stays at the front of the player return area queue but is not allowed to enter until the next opportunity.
- 3) Returning players must have both feet inside the playing area in order to be able to be hit, or to catch.



10. Live and Dead Balls

- 1) A ball thrown by an opposing player only becomes “dead” when it makes contact with the floor (or other external surface), or is caught. The thrown ball is still live on contact with another ball or player, including any ball not in a player’s possession. Multiple hits can therefore be made as a result of one throw.

11. Hits and Attempts

- 1) An “attempt” is the act of throwing the ball at a member of the other team to try to hit them with the ball. The thrown ball should be within 1m of a targeted opposition player at some point in its path to be deemed a “valid attempt”.
 - a. In adult events, failure to make a valid attempt with the thrown ball will result in the throwing player being called out.
 - b. In U11, U13 and U16 events, failure to make a valid attempt will not be called out, unless the referee believes the ball was deliberately thrown without any intent to hit. In this case, a warning for an invalid attempt will be given. A subsequent invalid attempt will result in the player being called “out”.
- 2) Balls may only be thrown, with the exception of a block attack.
- 3) Players are not allowed to roll a ball to the opposing team, unless instructed to do so by a match official.
- 4) A throw may be performed with one or both hands and must involve the ball leaving the throwing player’s hands before it makes contact with the opposing player; players may not be “tagged” out.
- 5) Players who intentionally kick or spike a ball will be called out.
- 6) A player is hit out the moment that any part of their body, hair or clothing is hit by a live ball. This includes any ball rebounding off another player or ball (both blocked balls and balls lying on the ground on court), not just being hit by a ball directly thrown by the opposition.
- 7) In U11, U13, and U16 rules, any hit above the shoulders (a “head shot”) is not out. However, the referee can call a player who has been hit above the shoulders out if:
 - a. The hit player uses their head to block an opposing throw.
 - b. The hit player is ducking down whilst the ball strikes them on the head and the head may therefore be preventing the ball from hitting another part of the body.

The thrower is out if they strike an opponent above the shoulders deliberately.

- 8) For a player to be hit out the original attempt must be valid and made by an “in” player.
- 9) A player is out at the moment of contact. When a player has been “hit” they are not permitted to take any further part in the game unless and until they have saved themselves by catching the ball that put them out.



12. Catches

- 1) A player is out if a live ball that they have thrown is caught by an opposition player. When this happens, the throwing player is out and the catching player also brings back into play one of their team's out players. If there are not out players, no one is brought back into play.
- 2) When a player jumps to make a catch, the catch is complete once the player has control of the ball. Any subsequent actions, such as being hit by another ball or landing out of bounds will be seen as a separate action that happens after the catch. In these instances the catch will stand but the catching player will then be out.
- 3) Where momentum carries a player off court whilst making a catch, the catch will still count providing control of the ball is established before the player makes contact with any ground off court, including the boundary lines.
- 4) A catch on a ball thrown before it is "live" (for instance, following the opening rush or following a retriever returning a ball to the court) will be considered a valid catch.
- 5) A catch made on a player who still continued to throw although already "out" will be considered a valid catch, so long as time has not stopped and the throwing player had at least one foot on court when releasing the ball.
- 6) A player is allowed to fumble a ball while catching. Where a live ball initially hits a player and bounces off them, the ball is still live and may still be "caught", but the hit player is "out" unless they are the player to catch and secure control of the ball – and this must be before the ball touches another player, surface, or object.
- 7) A catch is only complete when a player has full control of the caught ball – the ball must be stable and in contact with at least one of the player's hands.
- 8) If a player becomes out during the catching process, before the catcher has full control of the caught ball, the catch does not count.
- 9) A player is allowed to drop a ball in their possession when they are attempting to catch a thrown ball.
- 10) Players are not permitted to use their uniform in a way that assists in the catching of a ball – for instance, pulling out their shirt.

13. Blocking

- 1) A player can use any live ball or dead ball in their possession to block another ball. The blocked ball remains live following contact with the blocking ball. If the blocked ball deflects off the blocking ball onto the blocking player, a player on their team, or an opposition player, the hit player will be "out".
- 2) Any hands holding a ball used to block with will be regarded as part of the ball. Any player hit on the hands by a live ball in these circumstances is therefore "not out".



- 3) When a player uses a ball in their possession to block a thrown ball, the player will be called out if they drop the ball that they are holding as a result of the impact of the thrown ball. The thrown ball must still be “live” for this to result in an “out”, and so must not have hit the floor or other surface before touching the impacted dodgeball.
- 4) A blocked ball can be caught. If the blocked ball is caught by a player not on the blocking player’s team, the blocking player will be out and an out player on the catcher’s team will be brought back into play.
- 5) If the blocked ball is caught by a player on the blocking player’s team, the original thrower of the blocked ball will be out and an out player on the catcher’s team will be brought back into play.

14. Lines and the neutral zone

- 1) A player should avoid touching with any part of their person, including clothing, any line marking the boundaries of their team’s section of the court, or any surface beyond these boundaries.
 - i. At least one foot must touch the ground within the court boundary lines, with no part of the player’s body touching ground outside of the court boundary lines, for a player to be considered in bounds.
 - ii. A player may be called out by the referee for going out of bounds.
- 2) A player will be called “out” if they step out of bounds to attempt to make a catch or to avoid being hit.
- 3) Players from both teams may enter the neutral zone. Touching the opposition’s neutral zone line or any ground over the opposition’s neutral zone line with any part of their body or clothing will be called “out”.

16. Behaviour

- 1) A player will be called out if they display poor behaviour (for instance, swearing or abusive language) towards an opposing player, volunteer, spectator, or match official. This includes any undirected swearing that is within earshot of the referee.

17. Stalling

- 1) Players shouldn’t intentionally stall the game. When a team has possession of two or more balls, they will be regarded as the team who must be active, and will have five seconds to make an attempt with the balls in their possession from the moment the match official has called on them to “play” those balls.
- 2) Once a team has or can have possession of two or more of (the majority of) the balls in play, the match officials will allow them up to 5 seconds in which to initiate an attack on the other team before instructing them to “play” those balls if the official believes they are still intentionally stalling.



- 3) A dodgeball is considered to be in a player's possession if it is in hand or it is within a reachable distance of the player (if within reachable distance of more than one player, the ball is in possession of the player closest to it who does not currently have a ball). Teams must gain possession of a dodgeball as soon as they are able to do so.
- 4) Teams are allowed to retain possession of only one of the balls that was in their possession at the time that they were called to "play ball".
- 5) If more than one player has not thrown a dodgeball or could have possession but has chosen not to pick up the ball by the time the five seconds expires, they will be called "out".
- 6) The referee may call "play ball" at any point when a team has possession of two or more balls and the referee considers the team to be intentionally stalling the game. The referee is not required to notify teams of how many seconds have passed once they have called "play ball".
- 7) Passing a ball to a team-mate will not pause or re-start the five seconds.
- 8) In situations where there are more dodgeballs on a player's side of the court than there are players, all players must make an attempt within 5 seconds, and this will continue until the opposing team has the majority of the balls. For example, if a team has 1 player left on court and all 3 balls in their possession, that player must throw two balls within the first set of five seconds. The players would still have the majority of balls, so providing they were still "in", they would have to throw one more balls within another set of five seconds.
- 9) If each team has 1 ball and a ball is stationary in the neutral zone, the side with the majority of the balls is the side with the player nearest to the stationary ball.
- 10) Where a player in possession of a ball on a team that has been told to "play ball" becomes hit "out" during the play ball count, the number of balls needed to be "played" by that team is reduced by one as that player's ball is discounted.
- 11) Where a player in possession of a ball on a team that has been told to "play ball" makes a catch or tries to make a catch (generally by dropping their ball) during the play ball count, the number of balls needed to be "played" by that team within the 5 seconds does not reduce – trying to catch is not an attempt.

18. Simultaneous Plays

- 1) Simultaneous play occurs when two or more opposing players are hit and/ or catch balls at the same time, such that the match officials cannot determine which play was completed first. All results are resolved simultaneously; each player hit is deemed "out", and each catch results in one player returning from the player return area.
- 2) Should a simultaneous play result in all players being eliminated, the set will be concluded and the set result will be declared a draw. Both teams will then take up their positions for the next set.



- 3) When a player is in the act of catching a ball and is hit by another ball simultaneously, such that the referee cannot determine which action was completed first, this is classified as a simultaneous catch and hit. This means that the thrower of the caught ball is deemed “out”, the catching player is deemed “out” for being hit, and one player from the catching player’s team is allowed to return to the court from the player out area for the catch.

19. Injury

- 1) Where feasible, an injured player is expected to make their way off court as soon as possible. Referees will stop time when a player is injured. The injured player should be substituted for at least the remainder of the set. Where a team has no substitute they must play short-handed.
- 2) An injured player who is unable to carry on playing and is still “in” may be replaced by a substitute who will take the injured player’s place directly by coming straight into play. Where the injured player is “out” the substitute will take the injured player’s place in the out queue in the player return area. The injured player is not permitted to participate for at least the remainder of the set.
- 3) Any player suffering from a blood injury must be replaced, or must leave court for at least the remainder of that set if there are no substitutes. The flow of blood from the injury must have stopped before the player may return to court in any new set.