



BRITISH DODGEBALL

SEASON REPORT

2023 - 2024 SEASON



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Welcome to our 2023-24 Season Report. The report highlights each area of our 4 year strategy, what challenges and successes we are facing as an organisation and what to expect next season from British Dodgeball.

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COME JOIN IN



People of all ages and abilities are afforded easy access to the sport.

Our aim is to create a strong pathway for the sport that enables opportunities for people to play the game at the correct level for them. This approach ensures we create opportunities for elite players via our national league and championship pathway as well as for new players via our regional and recreational leagues.



REC LEAGUES

Local leagues within cities, towns or counties. British Dodgeball has successfully applied for funding to develop Rec Leagues from this summer in partnership with local clubs in Derby, London, Berkshire and Manchester. We hope the success of these initial leagues lead to more future rec leagues across the UK.

REGIONAL LEAGUES

Provide opportunities for teams to play across their region which may be across multiple counties or a home nation. The size of the region is determined by the number of clubs within that region wishing to participate in the regional league. In the 2023-24 season a total of 73 teams have competed across 11 unique leagues. 2 of which have been women only leagues where 14 teams have competed.

NATIONAL LEAGUES

Standalone National Leagues in Northern Ireland & Scotland as well as our national league pyramid in England have continued to grow. These leagues are ever expanding and alterations to the pyramid are likely to occur in order to keep up with the sports growth. We will be conducting a consultation ahead of the 2025/26 season to determine the next step for growth of our national leagues. This may include a proposal to extend the national league season. In the 2023-24 season a total of 93 teams have taken part in our national leagues, up from 86 in the 2022-23 season.

BRITISH CHAMPIONSHIPS

We want the British Championships to become the big showcase event of the season where the sport can attract an audience, media coverage and sponsorship. Investing in the British Championships this season has been a priority for British Dodgeball as we bring the whole of the sport from across the UK and all age groups together under 1 roof in Nottingham.

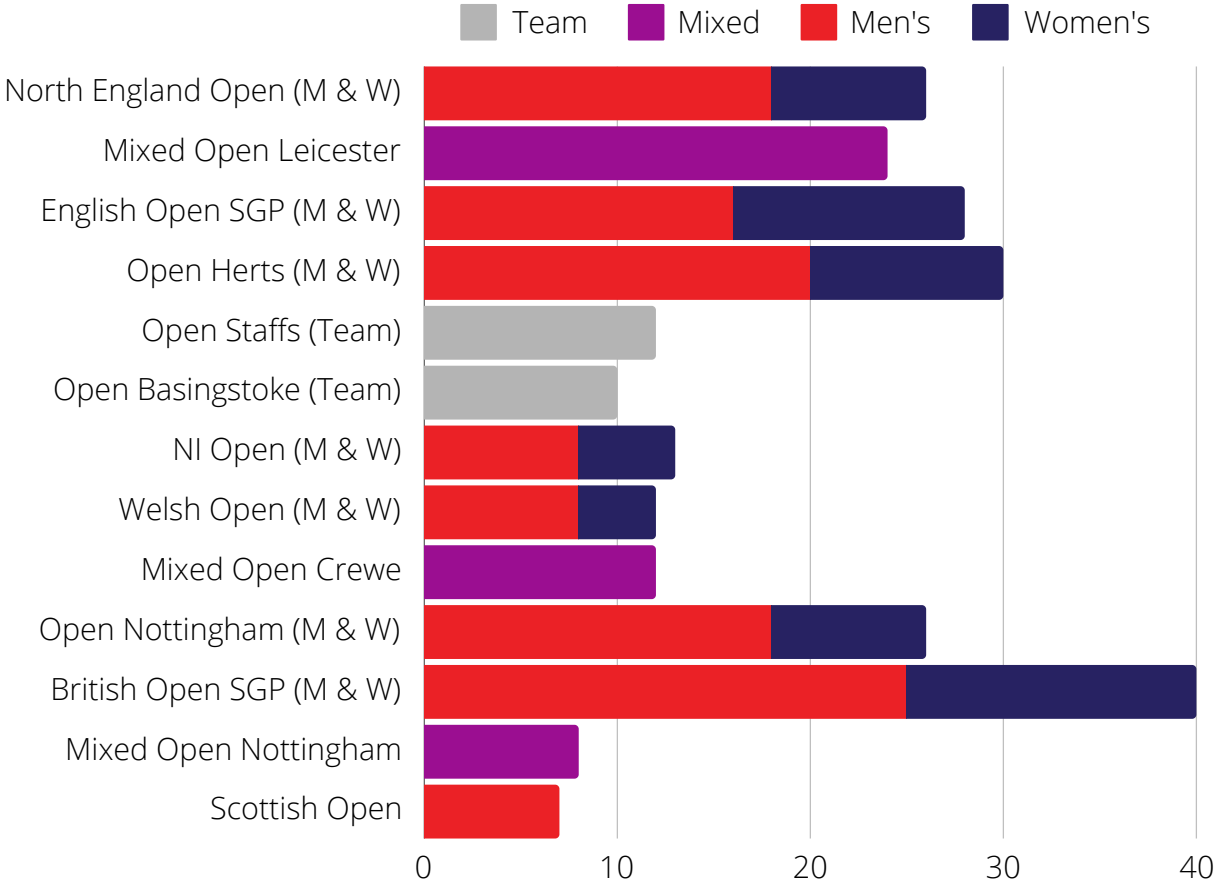
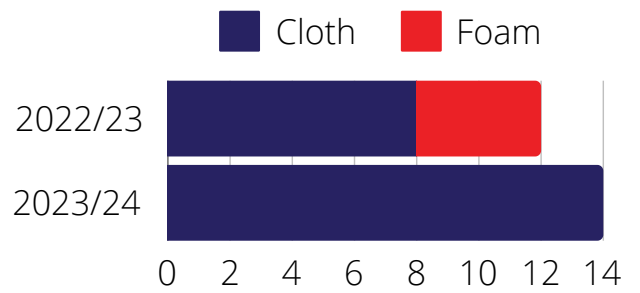
COME JOIN IN



As well as the league pathway British Dodgeball also delivers the following events for adult community dodgeballers throughout the season.

OPEN EVENTS

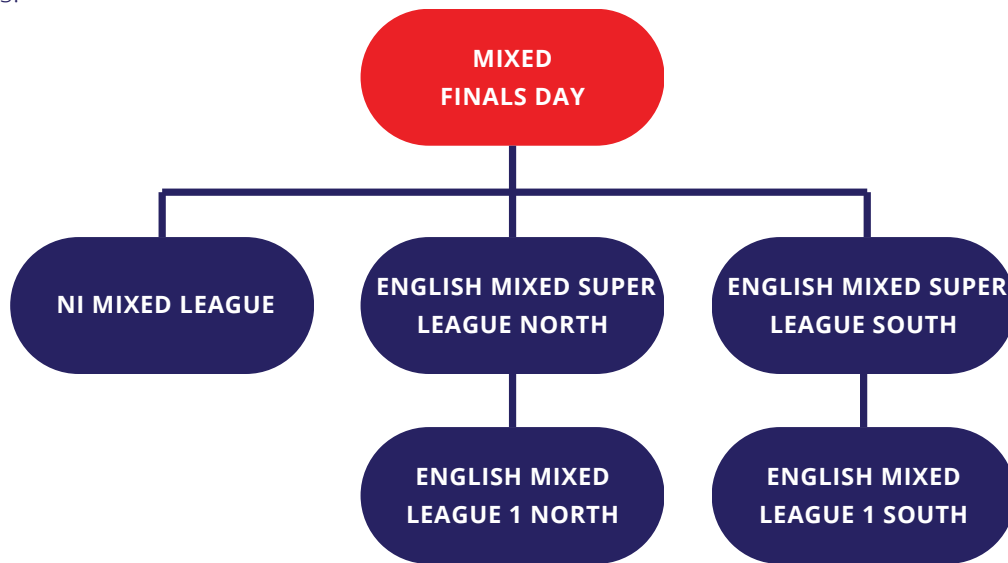
1 day events where teams and clubs compete. Our 2023 members survey showed that there was an interest in us hosting more adult opens in the UK. In order to enable this to happen within the busy events calendar we removed the 4 foam opens that had little demand and raised the number of cloth opens from 8 to 14 for the 2023/24 season.



COME JOIN IN

MIXED LEAGUES

A separate mixed league system operates with 2 North and 2 South divisions in England plus a Northern Ireland mixed league competing throughout the season. The first mixed finals day towards the end of the season took place this year with Ballyhackamore Barbarians claiming the title of the first ever UK Mixed Champions.



NATIONAL TEAM EVENTS

Since 2017 British Dodgeball has hosted the European Championships in Newcastle, The Northern European Championships in Middlesbrough, the Home Nations League across the UK and The Atlantic Cup in Manchester. We are looking into the feasibility of hosting an International Home Nations 2 day event for both adult and junior age groups during the Autumn of 2025. We see this as the best option for British Dodgeball to raise the profile of the national teams within the UK in order to secure future investment for them and the sport.



GIRLS DODGE TOO!



Our aim is to provide new opportunities that increase female participation in dodgeball.

WOMEN'S REGIONAL LEAGUES

14 teams have taken part in our new women's regional leagues in Nottingham and Basingstoke. 50% of whom were not competing in our national leagues the previous season. The regional leagues have proven an excellent opportunity for new teams from Altrincham, Berkshire, Chippenham, London and Pratts Bottom (SE London). They have also welcomed new university teams such as Bath Uni and Manchester Uni as well as some more established club teams.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

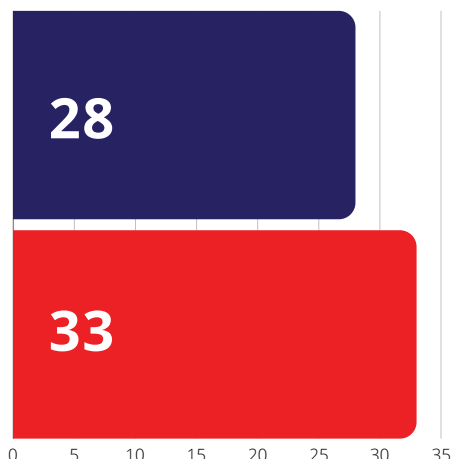
We wanted to use International Women's Day in March to both shine a spotlight on women and girls playing dodgeball in the UK and find out more about how we can plan ahead to do more to support this area of our strategy.

Our short film that showcased women and girls playing dodgeball at university, within the adult community and the junior events can be found by visiting our YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/britishdodgeball

WOMEN'S SURVEY

We recently conducted a survey for women and girls who are either playing, coaching, teaching or spectating dodgeball to complete. The words below were common responses across all 36 people who completed the survey when asked what dodgeball means to them:

inclusive **FUN** community
competitive **TEAMWORK**



28 respondents believed that opportunities for women & girls in dodgeball have improved over the past 5 years.

33 respondents believed that more could still be done to improve opportunities for women & girls in dodgeball.

GIRLS DODGE TOO!

The messages below highlight the responses received to our question to you of what British Dodgeball can do more of to grow and support the game so that an increased number of women & girls enjoy playing dodgeball.



positions of responsibility at clubs to be held by women

MORE BEGINNER LEAGUES

more women's only clubs

more women's only competitions

more female coach initiatives

showcase female talent

INCREASED VISIBILITY

sign up to the active bystander programme

incentivise women's teams to enter opens

introduce a women's league in scotland

a reporting system for sexist behaviour. especially at mixed league

WOMEN'S ONLY TRAINING

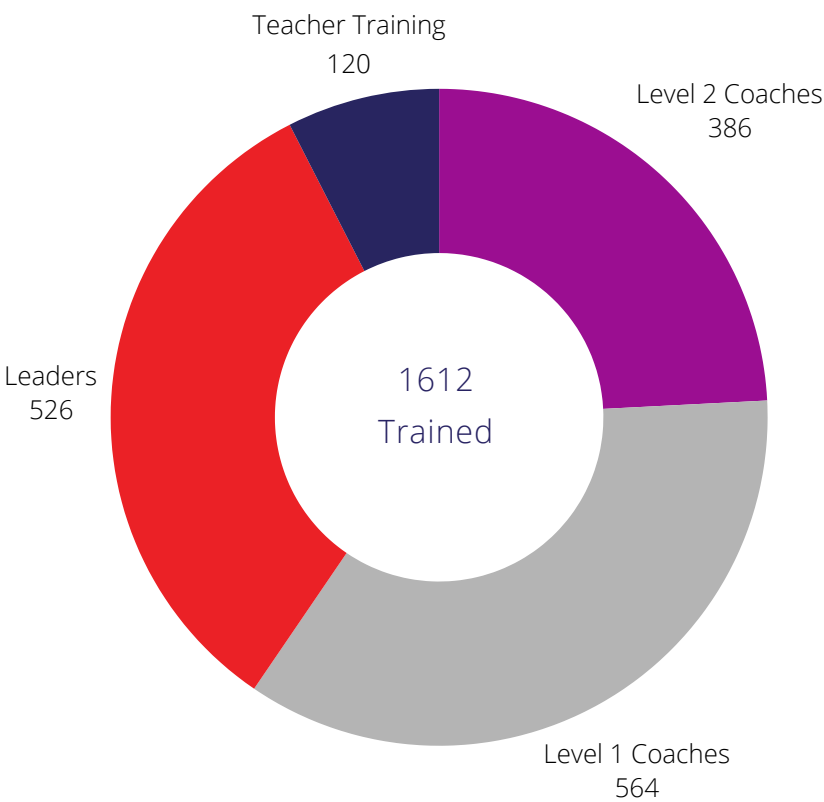


COACHING

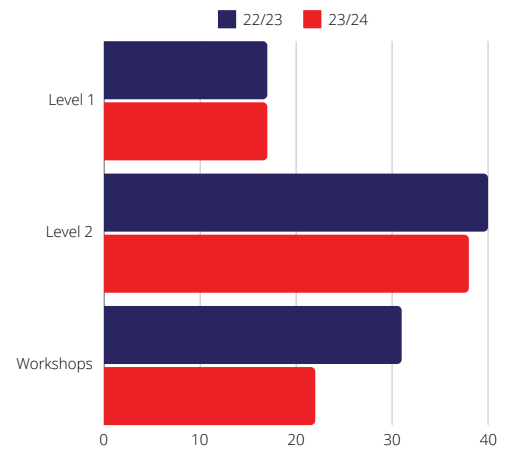


Increase the number and quality of coaches within the sport.

We're continuing to offer both open coaching courses for individuals or small groups as well as closed coaching courses for schools, colleges, universities and companies. For the first time since 2017 we are seeing a drop in the number of people completing our training courses which presents a concern. We understand the cost of living challenges that people are facing and know that we need to continue to generate an income via our coach education in order to ensure financial sustainability as an organisation. We will look at new methods of marketing our courses and working with partner organisations including more schools, colleges and universities to reach a new audience for our qualifications. Training more coaches is not just about generating an income however as the more people who have the ability to coach dodgeball will in turn increase the number of people playing dodgeball.



Courses taking place:



COACHING

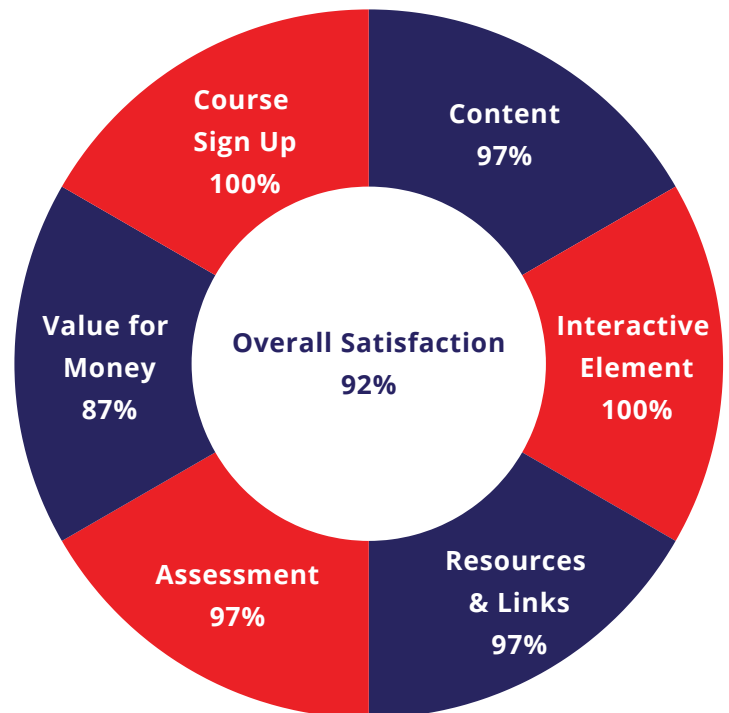
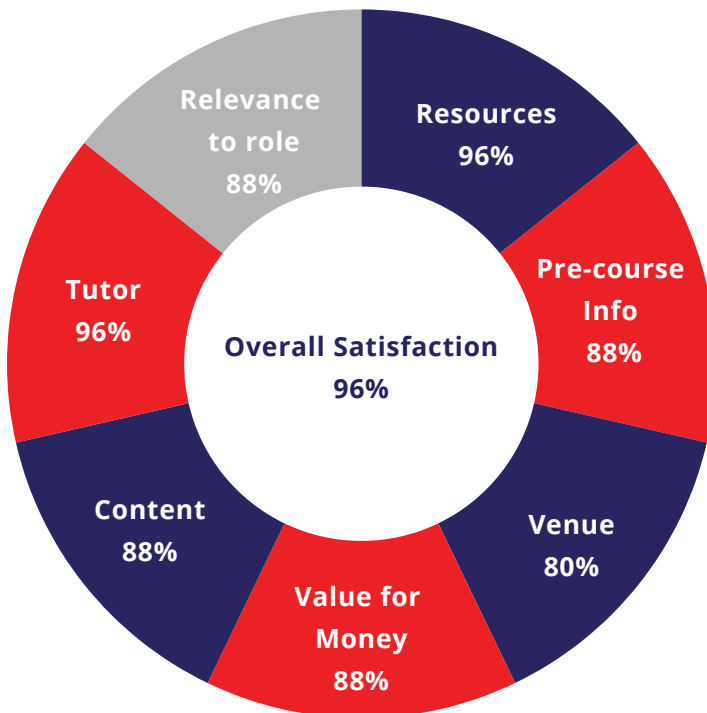


Course Feedback

Face-to-Face courses satisfaction rating:

Course Feedback

Online courses satisfaction rating:



"The course was simply laid out, but with detailed enough info. The quizzes throughout were helpful and kept it engaging"

"A brilliant introduction to dodgeball for novices like me - great value for money too!"

"Really enjoyed the course! I enjoyed the day and the positive and open environment created from the learners and the tutor. Will certainly be beneficial for me as I deliver day to day in school PE lessons."

COACHING

GET INTO COACHING

- We continue to be a market leader in terms of offering a competitively priced level 2 which helps to ensure cost is not a barrier to qualification. A highly important point with respect to a growing sport.
- A key success this year was implementing online provision (Introduction to Officiating Dodgeball) to help train over 500 young leaders to support at school competitions alongside 24 new British Dodgeball event referees.
- We are working in partnership with the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport & Physical Activity (CIMSPA) to determine how our coach education must adapt and change in order to be endorsed and align to the industry. Until this point, the coach education sector has only been loosely regulated, but this is rapidly changing and we aim to be at the forefront of this movement so that we can continue to grow the sport through training & education. As we work towards developing a new coach education pathway, we will aim to continue to offer coaching courses that cater for a range of groups:
 - full coaching courses which are mapped to the professional standard of sports coach so that club coaches can adhere to sector standards;
 - bolt-on dodgeball-specific courses which teach the technical & tactical elements of our sport to generalist coaches, PE teachers and university degree students; and
 - a range of introductory workshops that cater to young leaders and more informal staff CPD.
- This is a gargantuan amount of work, and will take some time (we estimate 24-36 months) to fully implement. When this is complete, we should have the ability to offer nationally recognised qualifications to an increased range of learners, and should help ensure that the training & education side of our organisation is future-proofed.



CLUB DEVELOPMENT



Club Development is absolutely at the forefront of our approach to growing the game in the UK. Our approach to supporting dodgeball clubs has always been positive with many clubs working with us over the years to access funding that will help them become more established within their local communities. Every dodgeball club individually and collectively has a role to play to help grow the game and British Dodgeball cannot be relied upon to do it all.

Our 1-1 club development sessions are engaging many clubs to think more long term, about the sustainability of their club and how this in turn helps shape the future of the sport. More clubs are now working in partnership with community organisations such as schools, colleges and sports partnerships to engage with more children and adults alike.

Our approach to working with dodgeball clubs this season has been to arrange 1-1 sessions between British Dodgeball staff members and affiliated clubs. This approach has been proving extremely successful and providing us with the opportunity to get to know each club individually, the challenges they are facing and be able to support them with a tailored approach. You can find out more on the next page about how a few clubs have been getting on.



CLUB DEVELOPMENT



Case Study - Kelvin Rapids

During our initial club development meeting we established that the biggest challenges facing the club are recruitment of new members and financial sustainability. We then worked with the club to access National Lottery funding that has provided the club with funds to cover venue hire, marketing, a local workplace event, referee training and equipment. The club has further aspirations to set up a new junior section in the new season which we're looking forward to supporting them with where we can.



Case Study - Berkshire Royals

Our initial 1:1 meeting involved listening to the club about their 2 key targets of starting a junior section and developing more contacts within their local community and then explaining how British Dodgeball can best help them to achieve these.

Some of the support has been as simple as providing advice on safeguarding, necessary qualifications, venue sourcing and advertising.

As well as the excellent community links the club is making with the university we will be supporting them to grow their new recreational league and help create a dodgeball society at the university.

Case Study - Rhondda Dragons

Rhondda Dragons have used our expertise to help them secure vital funding in order to further grow the game within their community. The club has received funding for equipment, delivery and coach training that has enabled them to increase the number of local schools and satellite clubs operating locally.



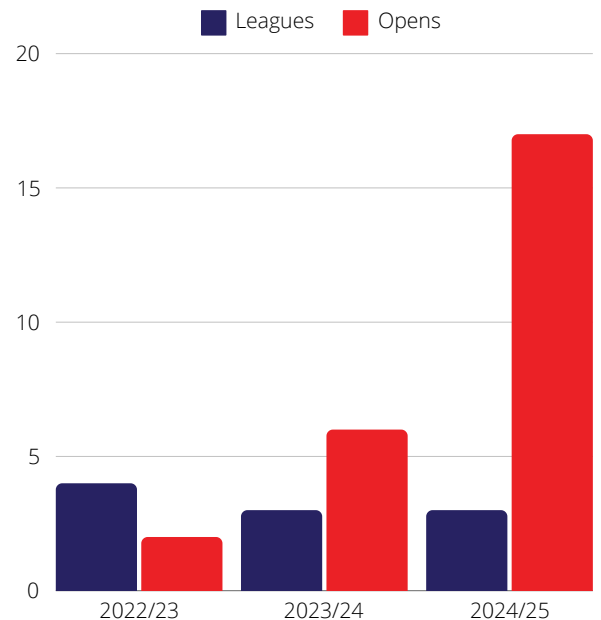
YOUTH



British Dodgeball recognises that for the sport to continue to grow there always needs to be a focus on youth development both within schools and the community. Our position as a sport highlights that the demand and opportunity for dodgeball is with children and young people and that funding can and should be accessed by ourselves, our member clubs and partners to benefit this area. It is great that more community clubs are seeing the benefits of introducing junior sections, both for their long term player pathway and financial sustainability. To be able to reach this demand for junior dodgeball we need to continue to grow the number of partners we work with across the UK. Our most successful projects have all come from excellent partner working that enables more people to be trained to deliver dodgeball sessions within schools and the community. This in turn will benefit the number of schools participating in our championships, the number of clubs being set up in the community and the number of future adult dodgeball players.

Junior Community Dodgeball

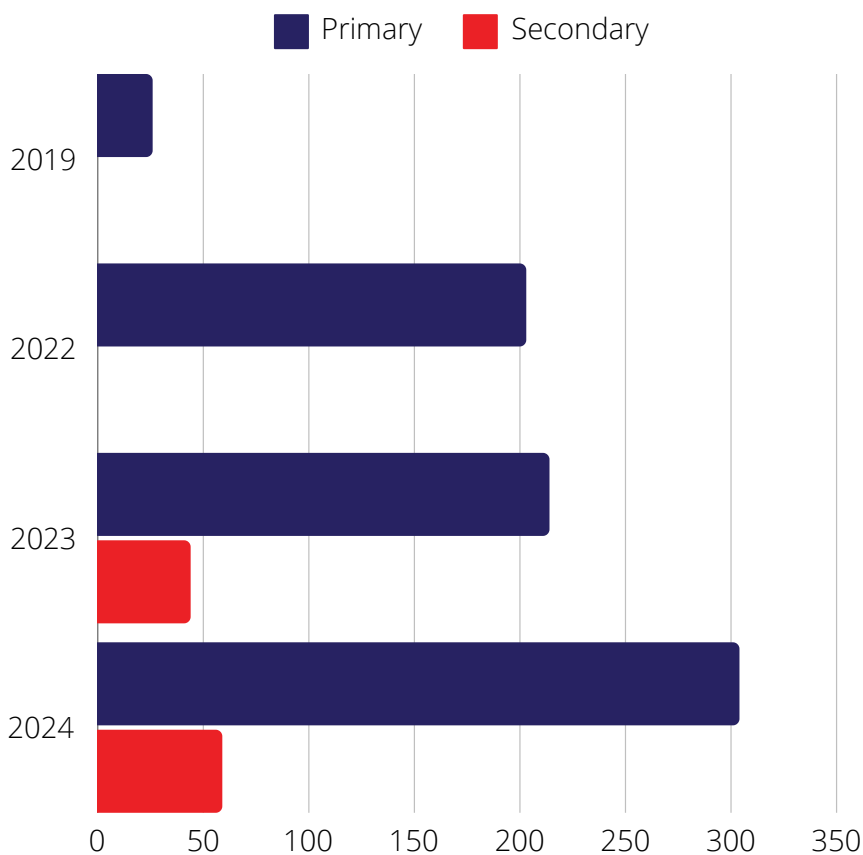
We have recognised this season that a change of approach is required in order to attract more community teams into our events. Our leagues that have operated in the North East, North West and the Midlands have had varying levels of success but we need to try and create more opportunities for children to play against a wider variety of clubs and also reduce the commitment level for those newer clubs and teams. From the 2024/25 season we will be amalgamating the North East and North West league, continuing with the very successful Midlands league, introducing a South West league and hosting up to seventeen 1 day junior opens across the UK. Each open will either be for u11's & u13's or u15's & u17's. The junior leagues will also run for 4 rounds throughout the season rather than the 2 x 3 rounds from previous years. It is hoped that this new approach with less commitment will see a larger variation of teams competing across the UK.



YOUTH

Schools Championships

The schools championships in England continue to be a huge success for growing the game. More children are playing dodgeball on a regular basis as a direct result of the championships. The standard of play is improving remarkably every year and the quality of teacher led coaching has improved also with a better understanding of the tactics involved in dodgeball. We are also seeing more local clubs working in partnership with schools. Unfortunately we have tried to introduce a schools championships in Scotland and Wales with no success. We have to realistic and admit that we as a sport and an organisation just don't have the capacity to do it. Quite simply we need funding to be able to invest in new staff members to be able to launch new initiatives like this. Once we have Sports Council recognition the opportunity to do so will greatly increase and we can support the demand for the sport.

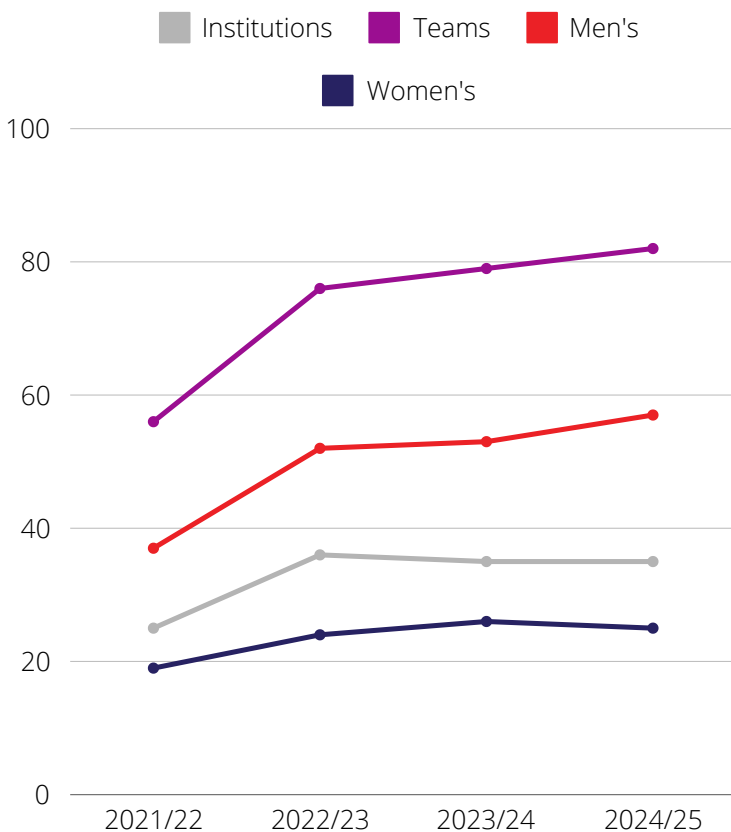


In the 2024/25 season we will be introducing a new secondary school age group for children in years 9 & 10.

UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE

BUCS

Our 3rd season as part of the BUCS Sport program has seen the number of university teams continue to increase. After significant growth in year 2 the number of institutions entering BUCS dodgeball has somewhat plateaued. Some new universities entered BUCS but did not participate and others have folded after a change in personnel and lack of succession planning. It is this second group that we are able to support more through our HEDA scheme. The greatest potential for growth within BUCS dodgeball is the number of institutions with women's teams. There are currently 15 universities from our 36 member institutions that have a men's dodgeball team but not a women's. We're hoping to improve our own university open offer to encourage more women's team participation across the UK through more women's categories. We need to ensure we work closely with our member universities to support them to do so and discover why they currently are not. It's a challenging task for an organisation with limited resources and we hope to use our improved marketing and media team to showcase successes and case studies of women's university dodgeball.



College

Through consultation with the Association of Colleges Sport we have discovered that colleges are keen to arrange informal matches between themselves. To aid this we have developed a College Dodgeball Toolkit that provides advice on what equipment to use, rules to play by and formats to use. This could be home and away match ups or small round robin games involving multiple teams.

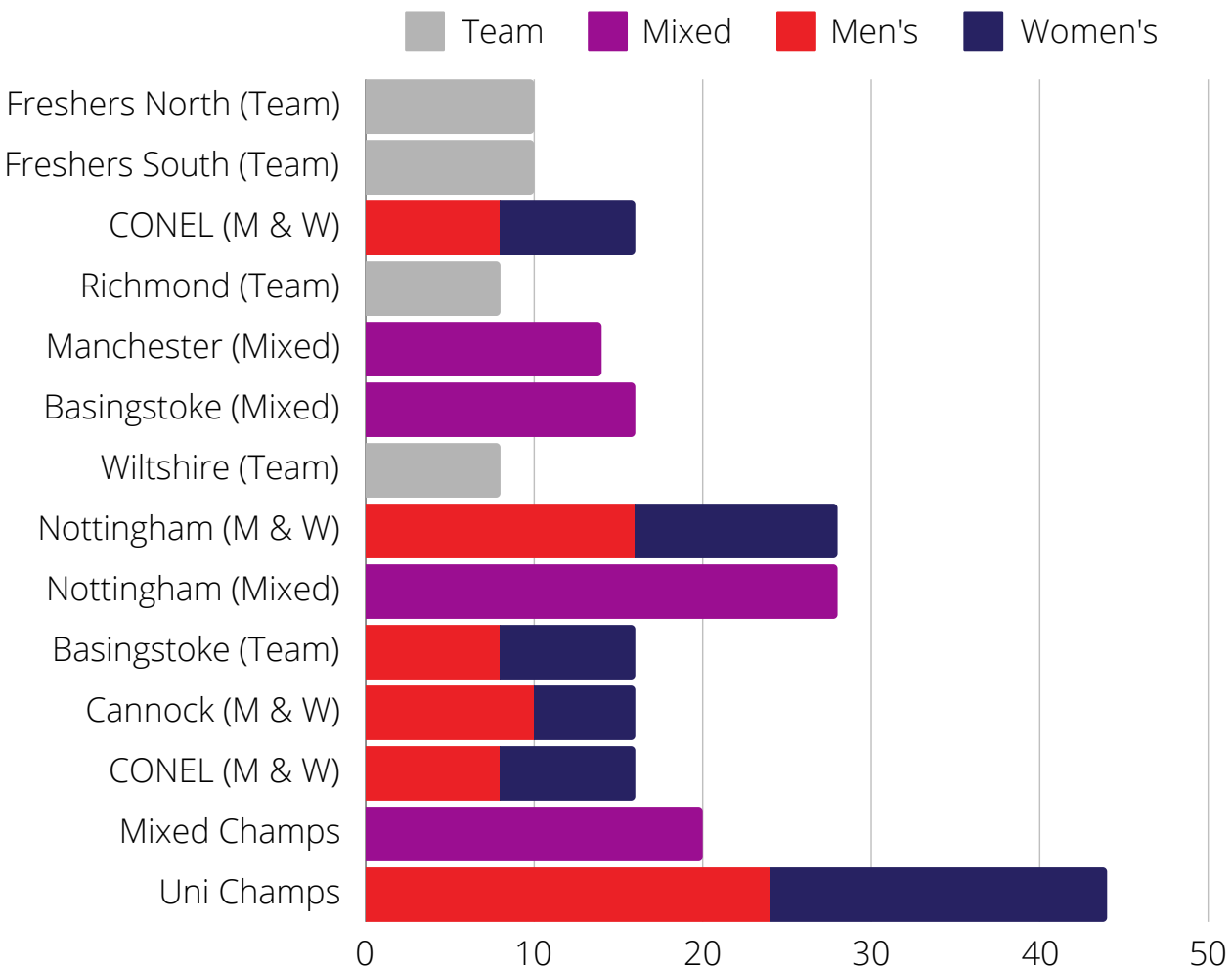
Our College Dodgeball Map provides colleges with information about who else is playing and how to get in touch to arrange games.

UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE

Opens

British Dodgeball held a total of 14 University Opens in the 2023/24 season which included 4 with mixed categories, 5 with team categories, 5 with men's categories and 5 with women's categories.

We have been hosting Team events in areas where previously we have struggled to fill both a men's and a women's category event or the venue size/timings are not conducive of a multi category event. Based on your feedback we're looking at amending this where possible next season to support more female players to participate in our events.



UNIVERSITY & COLLEGE

Higher Education Dodgeball Activators

After an extremely successful inaugural year the HEDA scheme will be renewed for the 2024/25 season in order to continue to support the growth of university dodgeball.

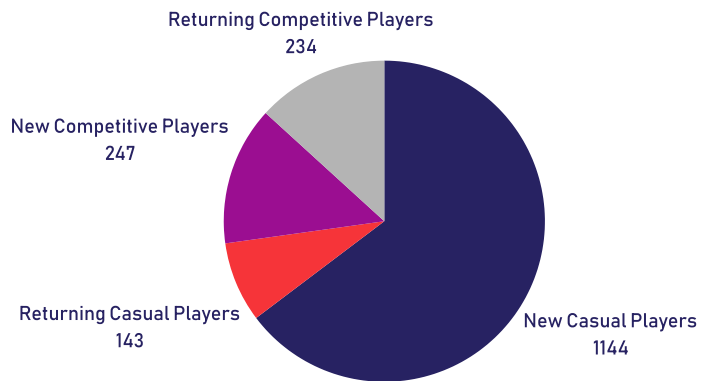
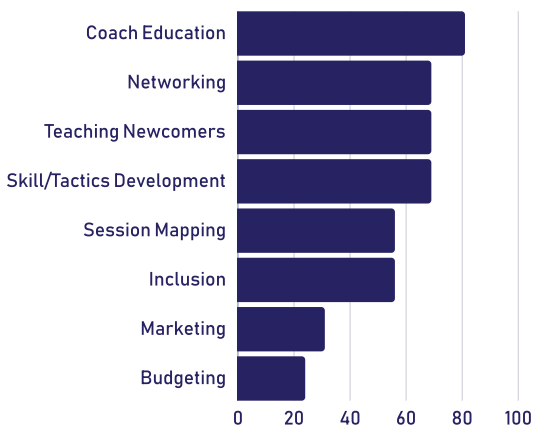
What is the HEDA scheme?

The objective of the scheme is to empower driven ambassadors from each institution through training to ensure that dodgeball is integrated into university sport at each of our member universities. HEDA's are active players and committee members who want to support the sport and see dodgeball grow at all levels in the university, or those working to set up a session/club with their sports officer/athletic union's support. British Dodgeball provides support of approximately £9,000 each year to the HEDA scheme which marks a significant commitment and investment to university dodgeball.



The most useful elements of HEDA training in 2023/24 were (%):

1736 people directly engaged by our HEDA team



“I think the HEDA scheme is invaluable in supporting coaches & providing inspiration for sessions. It was really great to have a network to communicate with other clubs, and share successes and challenges. One example of this was discussing the details for the freshers’ tournament at the beginning of the year. It meant that I could gauge how other clubs were feeling about it before making a case.

The day itself was so well ran. The presentation was engaging and I was easily able to share relevant slides with committee members who found it so helpful - particularly the financial excel spreadsheet, and inspiration for the media.”

James, 2023/24 HEDA



KEY POINTS FOR 2024-25

Come Join In

- New recreational leagues starting at a local level
- Build on the success of this seasons British Champs with an increased showcase for the community
- International Home Nations 2 day event in the planning for Autumn 2025

Girls Dodge Too

- The women's regional leagues will be expanding to 3 leagues
- There will be an increased visibility of women's dodgeball
- We will develop a better reporting system for sexist behaviour at dodgeball events
- We will showcase female talent and coaches

Coaching

- Increased marketing of case studies and partnership success - highlight how education establishments are seeing a positive impact from integrating our coach education program

Club Development

- Continue to support clubs on a bespoke level with our 1:1 club development sessions

Youth

- Seek further partners to grow the game across the UK.
- More junior opens by a considerable amount with the aim of including more teams and children in our competitions
- Introduction of Year 9 & 10 schools championships

University & College

- Continued work with HEDA scheme to support establishment of university clubs and women's sections in particular
- The introduction of University Mixed Leagues in the North & South of England
- More opportunities for women's categories at our University Opens



 **BRITISH**
DODGEBALL

