

CLUB DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Overview

British Dodgeball recognises that club's are the foundation of our sport. They are the face of the sport for many people throughout the UK, and as such it is imperative that we support clubs to ensure they are run safely and in a sustainable manner in order to safeguard the future of the sport in our country. This document outlines our requirements to clubs and support mechanisms in place to help clubs ensure good governance, financial sustainability and rigorous safeguarding processes are all in place.

Club Support

Club Stages:

- A key part of our strategy revolves around our [Club Stages document](#). This guide covers criteria clubs should have in place as they develop their organisation.

Direct Support:

- Each club is allocated a Club Support contact from British Dodgeball - a contact that club committees can receive guidance and support from at any time via email. This can include advice on all facets of running a club, support with funding, answering questions regarding competitions etc.
- Every 6 months, British Dodgeball development staff members contact with each member club with an update as to their current club status as per the [Club Stages document](#), and to ascertain the following:
 - If any new individuals have taken over key committee positions, so that we can contact the right person in each club should the need arise.
 - If the club would like to book in a Club Support Meeting in order to receive advice and support, ask questions, or to update their club status as per the Club Stages document.

Club Development Requirements: A Timeline

1. New clubs must have the criteria outlined on the [Club Eligibility page](#) in order to be eligible for club membership.
2. By the time a club has completed its first two full seasons as a British Dodgeball member club, it must meet the Developing Club criteria as specified in our [Club Stages document](#), in order to be able to continue competing in British Dodgeball National Leagues.
3. By the time a club has completed its first four full seasons as a British Dodgeball member club, it must meet the Sustainable Club criteria as specified in our [Club Stages document](#), in order to be able to continue competing in British Dodgeball National Leagues.

FAQ's

- **What is the rationale for the club development requirements?**
- These are in place to ensure clubs reach a certain point in order to help safeguard them and by extension, the community arm of our sport. Our club development strategy consists of 6-monthly optional meetings with clubs, where we assess where your club is at, provide advice and jointly set some criteria as targets to work towards before the next meeting. If we do not have a required end stage, then clubs could avoid engaging in this development journey and avoid progressing, instead operating potentially unsafely which puts our sport's reputation at risk. This is also unfair to volunteers from other clubs who do put significant time and effort into their work.
- **Is this supported by clubs?**
- Yes. The majority of club organisers agreed that there should be a requirement in place during our 1:1 meetings that took place January–March 2024, and 100% of clubs that responded to follow-up consultation all agreed with this requirement.
- **What if clubs do not want to become a Sustainable club by Year 5?**
- Clubs would not become de-recognised or fully lose the ability to compete; although they would no longer be allowed to compete in the National League pathway, they may still enter all Open events and Regional Leagues like an informal group can. This option provides clubs with the chance to continue to operate at a more casual level should this align with their wishes.
- **What if clubs are not in a position to become a Sustainable club by year 5?**
- At the time of writing, there are only 2 clubs which have existed for longer than 5 years which are still classed as Developing clubs. Over two thirds of clubs which are currently classed as Sustainable clubs are less than 5 years' old, showing that it is extremely manageable to become a sustainable club before the club reaches this age. Of the 14 criteria required to progress from a Developing club to a Sustainable club, 10 are policies or processes which are not too labour intensive to adopt and implement, leaving 4 which clubs need to plan to achieve:
 - A board or management team made up of at least three non-related, non-cohabiting people + Key committee roles fulfilled
 - Holding sessions which cater for 2 sections of the community.
 - Working towards building up a reserve of 3 months' outgoings as a reserve.
- There are of course unexpected circumstances which crop up in community sport e.g. "What if almost a full team of players in one section leave/retire at the same time, which is the final criterion the club has been working towards?" Should clubs engage with the development process but suffer setbacks or unforeseen circumstances, then the Development team can award an allowance of a further year to reach this point. The development team will also meet with the club representatives more regularly in order to ensure that additional support is provided.

FAQ's

- **How many clubs will be affected by these requirements?**
- 34% of clubs are currently listed as Developing clubs. After having spoken to all of these clubs, all but 2 actively mentioned that they wish to develop further and have the goal of becoming a Sustainable club. We therefore do not consider this requirement to affect the vast majority of clubs, but instead give clear goals to aim for and create a healthier future for the sport when combined with the support we are providing as part of our new Club Development strategy.
- **Do these clubs need a junior club in their 5th year?**
- No. We recognise that clubs can operate effectively in line with our vision and have a major positive impact on their local community without necessarily having a junior section. Focusing on women's participation instead (as just one example) would be highly encouraging to see. Sustainable clubs need to offer activity for 2 different sections: this could be men and women, two junior age groups or two open gender sessions in different areas so the group of attendees at each session does not generally overlap.
- **Will be there a further requirement for clubs to reach the next Stages (Established Club or Dodgemark Clubs)?**
- No. Although we fully encourage all clubs to develop past being a Sustainable club, there is no formal requirement for this planned.
- **My club is 3 years old and is still a Developing club. Do we only have 18 months to become a Sustainable club? And do we need to stop playing in the national league in the meantime?**
- No. All Developing clubs will have a full 4 seasons to reach this point from the start of next season. This means the first time this requirement will actually be actioned will be the 28-29 Season for current clubs as of the 24-25 season. All Developing clubs can enter & continue to compete in the national league until they reach Year 5, at which point they must be a Sustainable club to continue to compete.
- **You need to meet 22 criteria to become a Developing club in order to enter National Leagues - isn't this too many?**
- With the way the safeguarding in the sports landscape is changing to ensure that all clubs in the UK operate safely, this is an appropriate number. Many of the Developing club criteria are aimed at ensuring that clubs can operate safely at the most basic level, and ensuring the club volunteers are covered and protected should any unfortunate circumstances arise, e.g. access to first aid in case of injuries; a safeguarding officer in case of abuse or neglect; a data protection policy to ensure personal information is secure; a Level 2 coach & club membership to meet insurance requirements, etc. Groups that cannot/do not wish to meet these criteria have more options than ever before to compete outside of the national league pathway (regional leagues, opens and club-organised events) as an informal group.