

**THE BISFED DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Sub group CLUB DEVELOPMENT AND PLAYERS' PATHWAY

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**LONG-TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT IN SPORT OF BOCCIA**
**Introduction**

The development of boccia players has atypical characteristics. Defining one pathway between beginner and high-performance player based on the criteria of age can be difficult, as we observe players of all ages with magnificent performances throughout the pathway.

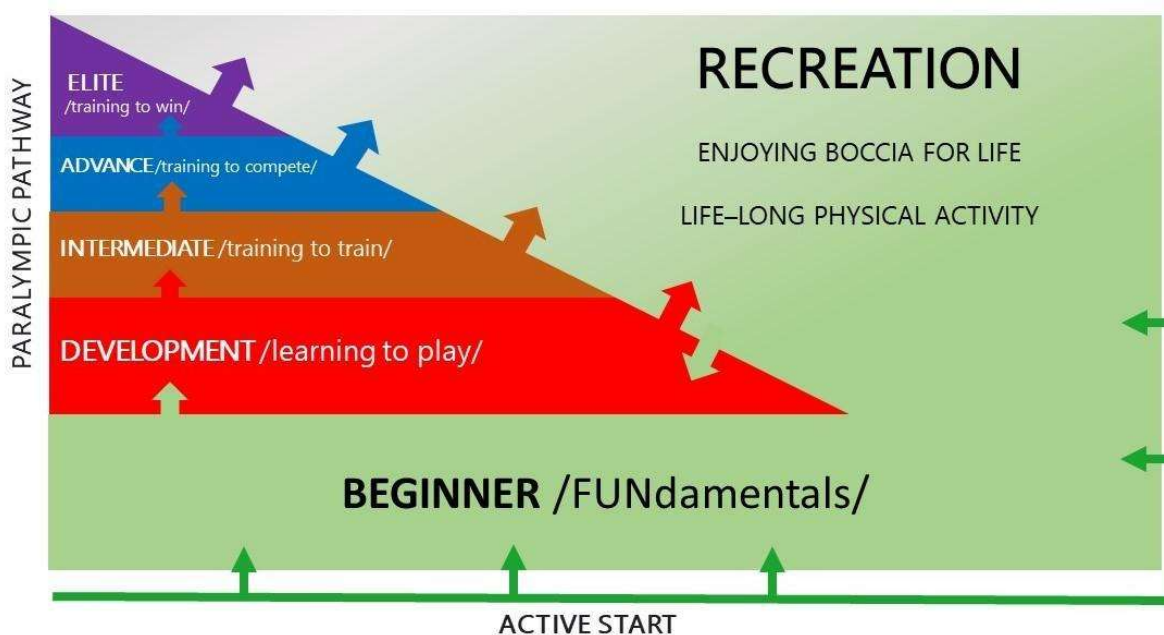
A player's career development can also be related to their specific physical profile. The entry point to each stage within the pathway may be different for each player due to the impairment and ability of the player, and therefore it is essential to recognise the needs of the individual player.

Regardless of age, we consider that it is important to define a set of sequential characteristics that allows us to create one consolidated pathway. Players will enter and transition through different stages depending on their individual characteristics.

Similarly, to other sports, it is essential to develop fundamental movement skills before the development of sport specific skills. A player's individual development may follow different components of one or more stages at any one time.

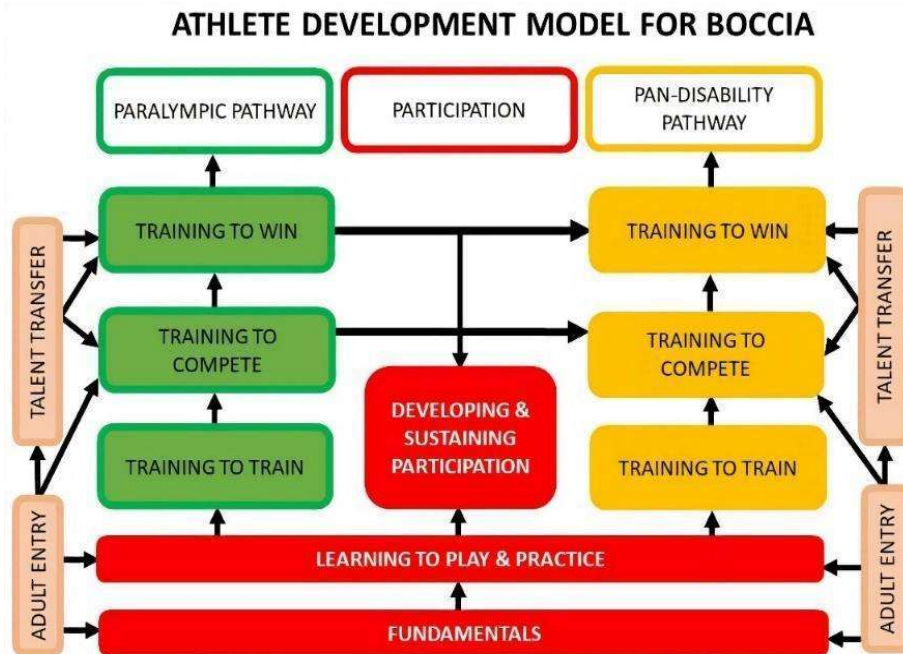
The different pathway stages describe characteristics that players must reach in each phase. Illustrated in the chart below is the description of the pathway between entry level and Paralympic level.

The following diagram illustrates the Boccia players pathway:



World Boccia has developed the Athlete Development Model for Boccia (ADMB) which is adapted from the Long-Term Athlete Development Model (LTAD). ADMB is taught in the Level 1 Coach Course to assist coaches to develop their athletes. It is important that the Player Pathway and Coach Pathway are aligned using the stages from the ADMB:

- FUNdamentals (Beginners)
- Learning to Play and Practice (Development)
- Training to Train (Intermediate)
- Training to Compete (Advance)
- Training to Win (Elite)



## LEVELS OF PLAYERS PATHWAY

### LEVEL 1 / BEGINNERS / FUNdamentals

This is the starting point of the player's journey. It may be introduced at a rehabilitation centre, school at a young age or through family fun days / try-it sessions.

This should be an exploratory phase to promote the love for the sport through an enthusiastic and playful session.

Beginners participate in an inclusive session and their activities should be adapted according to their individual needs. Group practice eliminates passive downtime, participants focus and attention will guide the flow and pace of the session and the goal is to build a positive attitude towards the sport.

Participants should be given the opportunity to try different methods of propelling the ball, with little emphasis on accuracy. Depending on the profile of the players, orientation of the chair and body should be directed to the target zone.

During this stage, the playing field may be reduced and modified, and further along the pathway, longer distances can be explored.

Basic rules of the game should be introduced with understanding the dynamics of the game and awareness of the violations.

Promoting positive experience and increasing motivation is more important than calculating scores.

The format of pairs and teams can be introduced to foster motivation and enthusiasm for the sport.

Other than the order of throwing balls and having an equal number of throws, no other rules should be explored.

Equipment can be diverse, homemade, or players may comply with the requirements of the sport.

Unused equipment from higher level players is a good option at this stage.

Depending on the player's ability, they can either stay at the recreation level or progress through the player's pathway.

Informal games between clubs, institutions and schools can be promoted, at this stage.

#### Important aspects when working with beginners:

- PRAISE AND ENCOURAGEMENT - BOCCIA IS A GAME AND JOY - Play the game!
- CREATIVITY, PATIENCE AND A PLEASANT APPROACH - Learn to propel the ball!
- JOIN TRAINING ACTIVITIES, SHARING EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCES – Get engaged!
- LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GAME – Explore the basic rules!
- ATTRACTION AND DIVERSITY OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES - Taking part in friendly club competitions.

	TECHNIQUE / SKILLS	TACTICS / STRATEGY	EQUIPMENT	RULES	TRAINING / COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT
<b>FUNDamentals / Beginners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explore types of propel/ release for throwers/ kickers</li> <li>• explore types of release for BC3</li> <li>• explore limits of trunk control and wheelchair movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A at this stage of development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• access to age and disability, specific equipment is key (boccia balls, boccia ramp, target mat etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A at this stage of development</li> <li>• players may learn the general concept of boccia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on developing confidence and desire to play boccia</li> <li>• minimal instruction and correction allowing individuals to test their own physical limits</li> <li>• activities accommodate the repetition of movement skills e.g.: throwing to a target</li> <li>• activities are largely unstructured with some structured play</li> <li>• joint sports activities</li> </ul>

**LEVEL 2 / DEVELOPMENT / Learning to Play and Practice**

After a successful introduction to the sport, players can progress to the next stage of the pathway. One of the key factors at this level is to find the best technique to propel the ball in a consistent way.

A player determines the best position of their chair in the throwing box and its orientation to the playing area. In the beginning, the court can be used with reduced dimensions. The targeted areas of the court for throwing drills should be progressively adjusted by the preferred width and length of the player. Specific physical strength and conditioning training becomes crucial at this level to enhance the player's motor control.

Players should have a strong knowledge of the basic rules, game dynamics and scoring process. Players have the ability to apply the rules during various game situations which occur during a training session. Sport terminology is recommended to be used and promoted. An augmentative method of communication can be used.

The focus is on ball placement within the scoring area and offensive and defensive play can be introduced. Indirect strategies may be introduced, as push on or push off shots. Equipment should be best fit for the player, and include balls of varying hardness.

Players should be familiar with the game of pairs and teams.

Players can be introduced to clubs and regional competitions.

At this stage players may undergo a national classification process.

**Important aspects when working with intermediate athletes:**

- Learning and practicing the variety of throwing.
- Understanding rules during the competitions.
- Using basic tactical elements during the match.
- Introducing pair or team competitions.
- Preparing for classification, how it works, knowing the rules.

	TECHNIQUE / SKILLS	TACTICS / STRATEGY	EQUIPMENT	RULES	TRAINING/ COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT
<b>Learning to Play and Practice / DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adjust the position of the chair in the box towards the target</li> <li>• determine best propelling technique and pattern</li> <li>• refine trunk control and balance</li> <li>• refine ball grips</li> <li>• breath control</li> <li>• controlled delivery of the ball</li> <li>• practice on the preferred type of shots</li> <li>• augmentative alternative communication if needed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being able to choose a position and angle of the chair</li> <li>• understand ball arrangement</li> <li>• progression of different target areas</li> <li>• build on placement in the scoring area</li> <li>• reduced court dimensions may still be used</li> <li>• offensive and defensive play introduced</li> <li>• progress in decision making</li> <li>• understand a call room process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• start using different hardness of balls</li> <li>• determine set of balls, ramps and assistive devices for player's individual needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduction of formal rules</li> <li>• familiar with basic rules, game dynamics and scoring process</li> <li>• adjust size of court pending developmental age of player</li> <li>• national classification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on developing motor skills to build strength, power, posture and endurance</li> <li>• participate in other activities such as swimming or other fitness activities</li> <li>• boccia terminology used</li> <li>• if interested athletes can start competitive practice at local / regional or school competitions</li> <li>• cooperation between players and sport assistants</li> <li>• Familiar with the pair and team game</li> </ul>

**LEVEL 3 / INTERMEDIATE / Training to Train**

This is the last stage of the training process and shows the greatest player development. At this level, the player has a defined classification and a greater understanding of the sport.

Players have defined and developed technical and tactical skills, and basic strategies.

The technical process has a consistent execution of the four stages (Set-up, Preparation, Delivery, Follow-through). The player improves in placement and pushing in their preferred areas.

Player requires a strong understanding of the rules and is able to consult about the rule book when necessary, to answer questions.

Player chooses and uses the appropriate strategies to achieve the desired outcome against their opponent.

Players reflect their performance through notations, video analysis, statistics and feedback from the coaches.

The player has their own dedicated equipment that allows them to play in the full court. The player follows a strong physical, psychological and nutritional routine. At this level, anti-doping policies should be introduced.

Players prepare for different levels of aspects of the competition cycle including pair and team format.

**Important aspects when working with advanced players:**

- Defined classification
- Understanding and using the rules
- Using wide variety of technical elements of propelling the ball
- Using tactical skills to build up the game
- Learning how to compete in different level of competitions
- Knowledge about mental, physical, nutrition preparations
- Following the strength and conditioning routines
- Data analysing

	TECHNIQUE / SKILLS	TACTICS / STRATEGY	EQUIPMENT	RULES	TRAINING / COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT
<b>Training to Train / Intermediate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well developed technical process</li> <li>• range of propulsion techniques</li> <li>• able to execute good line, pace and trajectory for selected shots</li> <li>• accurately propel the ball to the target</li> <li>• grow the efficacy level in 1st ball and in placement shots of players' preferred area</li> <li>• well developed shot types covering all areas of the court</li> <li>• practice the range of individual players' shot choose the best position of the wheelchair in the box</li> <li>• cooperation and communication with sport assistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• well defined strategies of the game</li> <li>• assess and choose the most appropriate type of shot</li> <li>• create offence and defence situations</li> <li>• create and use tactical elements to developed its own game</li> <li>• understand the flow of the game</li> <li>• cooperate within their pair and team-building up their own games</li> <li>• aware of where their performance needs to be improved</li> <li>• can identify multiple solutions for each situation and consolidate the decision-making process.</li> <li>• able to ask questions and has an opinion about the tactics</li> <li>• analysing its game using video analyses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adapted sports equipment to the player's needs and are essential for the quality of sports performance</li> <li>• own dedicated sports equipment that meets their individual needs and cover majority areas of the court</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge and complies with the rules of boccia</li> <li>• confirmed classification</li> <li>• understand international classification requirements</li> <li>• complete ADeL anti-doping program</li> <li>• understand and comply with anti-doping requirements and procedures</li> <li>• understand of TUE and medical declaration form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use of game analysis</li> <li>• players supported by integrated support team including: physicians, physiotherapist, strength condition coach, sport psychologist, nutritionist, lifestyle coaches, biomechanics</li> <li>• participation in national, regional and international competitions</li> <li>• play in team and pair divisions</li> <li>• able to make part of the training process, learning about the technical process</li> <li>• To mentor the development players</li> </ul>

**LEVEL 4 / ADVANCE / Training to Compete**

This stage requires a high level of autonomy and commitment from the player. Performance is consistent with skills and strategies well developed. Different types of shots are effectively demonstrated over preferred zones across the whole court. The player's technical process is refined for each different type of shot.

Training is centred around how to compete and the player's primary focus is to reach peak performance at targeted events, achieving success in a competition environment. Training and competition planning is conducted collaboratively between coaches and players.

The player chooses the strategy which best complements their individual abilities, while video and data analysis is used to assess the opponent's strengths, weaknesses and in-game strategies.

The player understands competition structure and how results affect their performance in a competition.

The player's equipment is high quality and customised to best accommodate the athlete's physical characteristics and preferred in-game tactics. The player is familiar with their own set of boccia balls and understands how to adapt to different types of flooring and changing environmental factors such as temperature. Sport specific wheelchairs and custom designed ramps contribute to the athlete's enhanced performance.

Psychological aspects play a major role, mental preparation and routines help the player to manage stressful situations. Physical therapy and nutrition are important to facilitate recovery and build stamina during training and competition.

At this level, the player's goal is to achieve a slot in the national team program, and an opportunity to represent their country at international competition.

**Important aspects when working with elite athletes:**

- Knowledge on how to compete.
- Ability to execute and adapt tactical decisions.
- Understand strategies.
- Game analysis.
- Understands the importance of preparation, including mental, physical and nutritional aspects.
- Understands competition formats including pairs / teams competition.

	TECHNIQUE / SKILLS	TACTICS / STRATEGY	EQUIPMENT	RULES	TRAINING / COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT
<b>Training to Compete / Elite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be consistent in all different shot types to cover the court</li> <li>• high level of consistency of the technical process execution</li> <li>• demonstrate high level of control of the line, pace and trajectory</li> <li>• effective cooperation with sport assistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strong understanding of strategy and tactics</li> <li>• shot risk management</li> <li>• understand the decision-making process and be able to make independent tactical decisions</li> <li>• take advantage of your own strengths and weaknesses to develop strong strategy</li> <li>• be able to consider the best tactics based on knowledge of the opponent's strength and weakness</li> <li>• complete a self-reflection on your own tactical decisions and impact of the opponent's game and score</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• best equipment possible that meets individual players' needs, tactics and playing surface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full understanding of the game rules and competition format</li> <li>• confirmed classification status</li> <li>• complete ADeL anti-doping program and understand anti-doping processes including TUE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborate with coach to develop and implement long-term training, competition and recovery plan</li> <li>• clarity of explicit targets at competitions</li> <li>• participation in national, regional and world international competitions</li> <li>• more comprehensive support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physicians</li> <li>- Physiotherapist</li> <li>-Strength conditioning coach</li> <li>- Sport Psychologist</li> <li>- Nutritionist</li> <li>- Bio mechanist</li> <li>- Lifestyle Coach</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



**LEVEL 5 / ELITE / Training to Win**

This is the level of excellence that all players strive to reach, and if they succeed, they certainly will be a legend! Great players are motivated by personal growth and improvement, they have a love for the process and their sport. They are committed to reaching their full potential in all aspects of training, preparation and competition.

As the player progresses the mental training becomes more important.

Players have great control of their technical process across all areas of the court, while executing various strategies and tactics...

The player can identify the strengths and weaknesses of the opponent and implement a strategy and use tactics which minimises the opponent's strength and targets the weaknesses.

Game and data analysis is used to enhance preparation, planning and training.

The annual training plan is organized around major international events. These players may reach the top world ranking. The player's training and competition plan is designed to ensure the player reaches peak performance at major international events and players at this level may reach the top of the world ranking.

They often mentor developing players, serving as an example and motivation.

Players at this level often mentor developing players, setting the example and serving as motivation for these athletes.

**Important aspects when working with elite:**

- Understanding and experience of how to win.
- Comprehensive understanding of strategies and the tactics required to execute strategies in-game.
- Competing for better world ranking.
- Has an influence on the whole sport movement.
- Taking part in a committee.
- Higher responsibility.
- Has an influence on the team.

	TECHNIQUE / SKILLS	TACTICS / STRATEGY	EQUIPMENT	RULES	TRAINING / COMPETITION ENVIRONMENT
<b>Training to Win / Master Elite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• highest consistency of all shot types</li> <li>• demonstrate highest level of control of pace, line, trajectory</li> <li>• highest consistency of technical process execution</li> <li>• highly effective ball delivery to cover the court</li> <li>• highest level of cooperation with the sport assistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• successfully implement of long term strategies during the game</li> <li>• optimise use of tactics to set up successful strategies</li> <li>• ability to decide the most suitable shot</li> <li>• manage and understand the flow and momentum of the game</li> <li>• game time management (Managing per shot timing in order to play within the time frame)</li> <li>• complete a self-reflection on your own tactical decisions and impact of the opponent's game and score</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• best equipment possible that meets individual players' needs, tactics and playing surface</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confirmed classification status</li> <li>• full understanding and application of the game rules and competition format</li> <li>• understanding the Paralympic pathway and the qualification processes</li> <li>• full understanding and application of the Anti-Doping processes</li> <li>• complete ADeL anti-doping program and understand anti-doping processes including TUE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sanctioned world competitions</li> <li>• collaborate with coach to develop and implement macrocycle of training, competitions and recovery to meet explicit targets</li> <li>• comprehensive team support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physicians</li> <li>- physiotherapist</li> <li>- sport Psychologist</li> <li>- strength conditioning Coach</li> <li>- nutritionist</li> <li>- biomechanist</li> <li>- lifestyle Coach</li> </ul> </li> <li>• video game analysis</li> <li>• game statistics for risk assessment</li> <li>• comprehensive reflection and review on an annual basis</li> </ul>

### Recreational level

Boccia does not always have to be competitive or be guided by levels of excellence. Boccia is a very inclusive sport which can be played by everyone, regardless of age, ability and gender.

Players at the recreation level play for the pleasure and the enjoyment of the sport. All athletes can be active in the developmental pathway.

Local and regional competitions can be organized to encourage recreational players to participate.

Equipment can be adapted to accommodate the player's physical characteristics; rules can be modified to facilitate greater understanding and a higher number of participants.

This level is an opportunity to introduce the sport and have fun.