



INTRODUCTION

Table Tennis England is committed to change the culture and structure of table tennis to ensure it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society - whatever their age, race, gender, ability or disability. The aim for all of us involved in the sport is to provide both a structure and the opportunities which will allow all disabled people to participate in table tennis:

- In the venue of their choice
- To the level of their choice
- To access the coaching and support they need
- To provide the pathways for player development through to the national squad and the Paralympics—from the playground to the podium
- To ensure greater representation of disabled people throughout table tennis

The purpose of this manual is:

- To provide anyone involved in table tennis with the information they need to help them to organise and run sessions that are accessible to disabled players
- To help everyone involved with table tennis gain the confidence to work with disabled sportspeople
- To help make table tennis sessions more accessible to all
- To support our volunteers in meeting the individual needs of disabled people

This manual should be used as a resource to supplement your normal routines and is not intended to be a definitive book. There are no right and wrong ways to work with disabled people other than to make sure your sessions, wherever they are based, are comfortable and welcoming for all.

For further information on any aspects of the notes please contact:

Table Tennis England,
Norfolk House,
Saxon Gate West,
Milton Keynes,
MK9 2DL

Tel: 01908 208860

E-mail: help@tabletennisengland.co.uk

THE ROLE OF TABLE TENNIS ENGLAND

Table Tennis England is the national governing body of table tennis and is committed to ensure that the sport becomes equitable at all levels. In 1998, after several years of lobbying, the National Development Officer for People with Disabilities was employed by the association with the responsibility to increase the numbers of disabled players at the grassroots level by initiating structures and programmes and

providing support to encourage more disabled people to take up the sport. In 2002 the national officer's role was expanded to include all aspects of equality, and then a year later to include child protection.

Table Tennis England, through its Whole Sport Plan also ensures the commitment to develop the sport and improve all the opportunities for disabled people to progress in table tennis through playing, competing, officiating and administering the sport at all levels.

Integral to the success of these aims and targets is the **Premier Club 'Ability'** programme, which provides table tennis clubs with the support to make their sessions and facilities accessible to all.

In order to attain all the aims and targets, Table Tennis England does not work in isolation but has developed partnerships with a number of key organisations:

- British Table Tennis Association for people with Disabilities (BTTAD)
- English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS)
- Sport England
- Youth Sport Trust (YST)
- Mencap Sport
- Special Olympics
- Disability Sport Events
- British Blind Sport
- UK Deaf Sport
- Wheelpower
- Cerebral Palsy Sport
- British Paralympic Association
- Les Autres
- Dwarf Sports Association UK

WHAT IS DISABILITY

In table tennis we hope to make our sport accessible to all, but it is important to be aware that for the purposes of competitive disabled table tennis there are clear classifications - which are dealt with in a later section. A person who is registered disabled may not necessarily qualify to compete within disabled competitions. However, this would not preclude them from playing within our club and non disabled competitive structure.

Disabled people and those who work on their behalf are concerned that negative images of disability and incorrect assumptions about disabled people can hamper their progress towards equal opportunities at work and in sport.

The traditional 'model of disability' has been rejected by disabled people because it presents a negative image by concentrating on what people are not able to do and reinforces the disability. For example, the media regularly highlight people's disability in their articles:

.....Mark Palmer - cerebral palsy sufferer - won gold at the recent World Games

The above reinforces the medical label frequently attached to disabled people concentrating on Mark's disability rather than the positive result of winning the gold medal at the World Games. The medical label stereotypes people as patients and dependant, focusing on the person's disability that prevents them participating and achieving.

Currently disabled people and those working with them prefer to use the 'social model of disability' which stresses that it is the environment, society and attitudes that disabled people. It is the practical barriers that prevent many disabled people from participating in sport, for example:

- The sports hall that is only accessible by steps
- Doors that are not wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair
- Venues that do not provide accessible toilet and changing facilities

The other major barriers exist within people's heads – where, for whatever reason, we are uncomfortable around disabled people. Table Tennis England's Disability Awareness Training workshop, which has been designed for all in table tennis, not just coaches, helps to provide the education and information to help people feel comfortable around disability.

ALWAYS REMEMBER DISABLED PEOPLE CAN'T CHANGE

BUT SOCIETY CAN!!!!

WHY SHOULD DISABLED PEOPLE PLAY SPORT

In order to try and answer the above question we need to investigate the reasons why non disabled people take up sport - these could include the following:

- To get fit
- To lose weight
- To compete
- To learn a new skill
- To meet new people to socialise
- For relaxation
- As part of a healthy lifestyle regime

Now let us consider why disabled people would want to take up a sport. The reasons will be **exactly the same!** However, there may be more emphasis on some of the reasons as follows:

- Disabled people are more likely to be unemployed although they are not unemployable!!
- Currently about 60% of disabled people are not in full time employment
- Due to the above many disabled people spend long periods of time at home on their own so to have the opportunity to meet new people and socialise can substantially improve their quality of life
- 90% of disabled people become disabled at some point during their life usually as a result of an accident, but could be due to illness. Regular exercise can substantially improve their quality of life.
- It has been medically proven that table tennis can improve a person's ability to focus and concentrate and is used in many rehabilitation units after people have incurred brain and spinal

injuries

The origins of disabled table tennis lie with Stoke Mandeville Hospital where it was used by Dr. Ludwig Guttmann when treating injured servicemen during and after the Second World War. (for more information please see the appendices)

COMMUNICATION

The next few sections deal with how we work with and coach disabled people, where communication is a key issue. The skill of communication is at the heart of everything that we do in every part of our everyday lives. How we adapt this skill will be significant in the integration of disabled people into our sport.

The first thing we need to do is to identify and understand what we mean by the principles of communication, as follows:

Principles of Communication

- Giving ↔ Receiving Talking ↔ Listening

In order to achieve the above we may employ any of the following:

- Speech
- Signals
- Sound
- Gestures
- Signs
- Braille
- Writing
- Demonstrations
- Facial expressions
- Text Messages
- Email

In addition to the above in today's technological age communication has become much easier by use of mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails and the internet.

Which ones we use or are appropriate to use will clearly depend upon both the type and the level of disability. Again there are no wrong or right rules other than to **always respect the individual and if any doubt ASK!!**

The following 4 sections are intended to be used as guidelines and will hopefully provide some ideas - the information is not definitive.

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT

People who have a hearing impairment or are deaf may wear an aid to assist their hearing. If this is the case the examples below should still be used as the aid may not completely correct the hearing impairment. Some people with no hearing may not be able to speak and use sign language as their only means of communication. Where there is demand Table Tennis England can organise Deaf Awareness Training sessions which do include some basic signing. However, please always remember that there are some gestures that we all use regularly which may be useful, for example: 'thumbs up' indicates that something is good, nodding the head to indicate 'yes', shaking the head to indicate 'no', and the hand cupped in front of the mouth means a 'drink'.

Problems could arise when someone with a hearing impairment attends meetings or training courses where an interpreter may be needed. Be aware that there is a significant cost implication when using interpreters although some of the small grant schemes currently available may provide funding to employ appropriately trained people. Table Tennis England has provided some of its courses with interpreters to enable people with a hearing impairment to qualify as coaches and table tennis development officers.

During competitions it may be helpful to always use scoring machines if you know that a member of your team or a participant has a hearing impairment so that they can track the scores.

From a health and safety perspective some facilities have fire alarm systems that include flashing lights. If your venue does not please ensure that, in the event of a fire, anyone with a hearing impairment is escorted from the building as they may not hear the alarms sounding.

The following are some general guidelines and practices your members should adopt when working with hearing impaired people:

- Always face the person and stand still ensuring that your face is in the light when talking
- Even when an interpreter is present still always talk to the individual
- When trying to attract attention lightly tap the person on the shoulder or indicate by waving - or it maybe useful to have an agreed signal that everyone can recognise
- Don't shout - the person will not be able to hear you!! This may seem obvious but instinctively if we know someone has a hearing problem we automatically shout or raise our voices. If someone is trying to lip read this has the effect of changing the shape of your mouth when you make the words and the person won't be able to lip read
- Don't chew or cover the mouth in any way
- Use gestures/signs where appropriate
- Write down - if you are having a real problem then just write down what it is you are trying to say
- Learn some signs
- Check for understanding
- Use visual clues
- Speak to the person
- Use a mobile phone most people with a hearing impairment use a phone for text messaging
- Use the internet and e-mails

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Most visually impaired people wanting to play table tennis have some sight whilst, as an association we welcome all disabled players, there are currently few blind players. When organising your coaching or playing session it is important to be aware of the levels of lighting required to help the person gain the most of the session. Allow the person to orientate themselves around the playing and other areas of your venue by describing the layout and guiding them round. **It is important that once they know where everything is located that you do not change the layout without telling them.** When guiding always ask the person's permission first and then support their arm under the elbow describing in detail any steps etc. that they are approaching - don't forget to tell them whether the steps are going up or down!! When walking away from someone with a visual impairment don't forget to tell them you are leaving, also when you approach them tell them you are there. If they are using a guide dog make sure that there is an appropriate area for the dog to sit whilst the session is underway.

For coaches' experiment with the size and colour of the ball to ascertain which the participant can see clearer.

The following are general guidelines that may be useful:

- Determine what can be seen
- Explain who is there
- Describe the playing hall and area
- Guide appropriately
- Support with materials on tape or Braille etc.
- Use sound and touch

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

Within this class of disability there will be enormous differences between individuals so it is important never to make assumptions about people's ability to understand instructions or to communicate. Always talk to and treat the individual according to their actual age rather than fall into the trap of communicating with them at their mental age (or presumed mental age). Always speak to the individual first rather than a parent or carer accompanying them, and again always treat with respect.

Each individual's ability to absorb information may vary so check regularly for understanding, repeat each item and, if necessary, break instructions into small pieces.

For coaches it may be necessary to repeat sessions several times to allow the individual to grasp any new concepts.

- Always ask the participant first and then, if appropriate, ask the carer/parent
- Assess skill and fitness
- Treat by age not ability
- Use simple language
- Use demonstrations
- Check for understanding at regular intervals

- Give time and always be patient
- Repeat practices
- Breakdown into small steps

WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH A PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

In general there should be no communication difficulties with this particular class of disabled player, unless they have a secondary impairment. It is also important to remember that not all players within this group are wheelchair users, but may use crutches or sticks or not need any additional assistance.

The following are some points to remember:

- Talk to a wheelchair user from a position of comfort to you both - when coaching you can stand but if you are talking for a period of time then it would be more appropriate to sit down so that you are facing the person. Bear in mind that if you continue to stand then the wheelchair user will be constantly looking upwards which can cause discomfort
- Respect personal space for wheelchair users - the chair is part of the person so do not lean on it when conversing
- Adapt any sessions to cater for the individual's needs - for a good coach this should be normal practice and will, therefore, be no different when working with any disabled person
- For paraplegics there may be a lack of skin sensation which could lead to injuries which the player may not be aware i.e. if the table has a roll-bar too close to the end, when the player moves in to take a shot they could crack their legs against the bar
- Again some paraplegics may have reduced ability to control their body temperature so ensure that they do not get too hot or too cold and rehydrate their bodies regularly
- If unsure always ask the person

GENERAL RULES FOR COACHES AND ORGANISERS

Within Table Tennis England's club programme clubs are being encouraged to put in place effective administration with regard to health and safety issues which should cover all members of the club. However, when compiling and completing membership and/or registration forms there may be some additional questions that would need to be included if all sessions are to be fully integrated, as follows:

- Does the player need to use a wheelchair, crutches or a walker
- Does the player use a guide dog
- Does the player use a hearing aid
- Does the player communicate by means of sign language
- Is the player using regular medication

What you can do to make your sessions more accessible to all:

- Avoid clutter in the playing area
- Make any necessary arrangements to accommodate the players' needs i.e. in the case of a guide or hearing dog is there somewhere for the dog to sit quietly during the session
- Is there room for a wheelchair user to access all areas of the playing and sitting areas
- If the player is accompanied by a parent/carer make that person also feel welcome - is there a comfortable place for them to sit during the session - can they have a hot drink - would they like

to join in the session

At all times if you are unsure then ask the person first, if you are still unsure that you are receiving the correct or appropriate information then ask the carer for reinforcement. Discuss with the player if there are any adaptations or modifications that you can make to ensure the sessions are more accessible.

ADAPTION AND MODIFICATION

There are some recognised adaptations and modifications that may help your club sessions to be more accessible - this is not an exhaustive list:

- **Equipment** - ensure that the table has a roll bar that is a minimum of 40cms from the end of the table. If it is not then look at covering the bar with some form of lagging to prevent injury to wheelchair players.
- **Bats** - some players may have a problem holding the bat so it may help to use strapping (usually bandages) to enable them to hold the bat firmly.
- **Balls** - for those players with a visual impairment consider using a different colour (orange is often preferable) or a larger ball.
- **Rules** - there are 2 rule changes approved by the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) which relate to wheelchair users:
 1. In doubles play wheelchair users may hit the ball consecutively rather than alternately. When a disabled pairing are playing a non disabled pairing the rule is normally adopted to both pairings, although most non disabled players find it easier to play the normal rules.
 2. During service wheelchair users must hit the ball so that if it were to continue on its path it would cross the line at the end line at the receiver's end of the table. The onus is on the receiver to call a let, once the ball is played the rally continues.

The service rule may be adapted for those players unable to serve according to the rules of the game due to their disability, providing that the service does not create an unfair advantage to the disabled player.

- **Environment** - as already stated normal health and safety rules apply but some of the following will be of increased importance:
 1. ensure all areas are clear of clutter
 2. make sure gangways are accessible for wheelchairs
 3. provide good lighting to all areas particularly if visually impaired players are involved in sessions
- **Integration** - provide all members of the club with disability awareness training

There is an adapted form of table tennis called **POLYBAT** devised by Doug Williamson at Nottingham Trent University. It is intended to provide severely disabled people access to a form of table tennis, particularly those with poor coordination.

The game had been developed and played for several years within disability sports organisations without support or approval by the Table Tennis England until 1999 when the, within national council support, it was recognised as a version of table tennis suitable for use as a coaching tool.

There are a number of similarities between table tennis and polybat:

- Played on a table tennis table
- Hitting movements are similar
- Scoring is the same

The differences are:

- The bats are paddle-like
- Played with an airflow ball
- No bouncing is allowed
- Sides are attached to the table
- No net is used

Polybat could be used as a tool by coaches for both disabled and non disabled players (particularly suitable for very young children) as it improves hand/eye/ball coordination, whilst making it easier for players to maintain a rally.

The ETTA has also included 2 levels of award within the Butterfly Skills Awards scheme for Polybat, thus enabling players of all abilities the opportunity to achieve.

For more information see Appendix 1 for the Polybat Information Pack and Rules

OPTIONS FOR COMPETITION

All players whether disabled or non disabled may want the opportunity to progress to higher levels within their chosen sport. For many the goal will be to play within the local league structure, for some the ambition will be to play socially but become involved in the sport in other areas e.g. administration, committee member, umpire, coach etc. For some the potential will be there to play at an elite level in tournaments and representative matches.

Table Tennis England is working hard to provide the structures for all to follow their own individual ambitions to succeed in their chosen career.

Table Tennis is a paralympic sport and disabled table tennis has its own World and European championships and elite competitions.

There are also opportunities for all interested in the sport to become umpires, tournament referees and coaches with relevant training available to both disabled and non-disabled players.

CLASSIFICATION

As already stated the majority of disabled people will play table tennis within the structures of their local leagues and clubs progressing into open tournaments and competitions.

For those players who enter tournaments and competitions for disabled players, coaches and administrators will need to have an understanding of Classification.

The system exists to ensure fair play for all disabled competitors so that in competition they will only

compete against players of a similar disability. There are currently 11 classes in total: Classes 1 - 5 are for wheelchair users, Classes 6 - 10 are for standing players and Class 11 is for players with a learning disability.

In order to gain classification the player must be assessed by a profiling physiotherapist. Following a short examination the player will be issued with a card identifying their classification and a brief record of their medical condition. These cards must be taken to all disabled competitions.

Profiling physiotherapists often visit major competitions to carry out assessments. More information can be found by contacting Table Tennis England.

For those players with a hearing or visual impairment the following apply:

- Neither of these 2 disability groups currently compete within the disabled table tennis World and European championships or the Paralympics. However, for those players with a hearing impairment they have their own World and European Games and the Deaflympics.
- Currently there are also European and World Championships for blind and visually impaired players, but Britain do not participate due to a lack of players.
- For more details on competitive opportunities for hearing impaired players contact UK Deaf Sport whose details will be in the later section on PARTNERSHIPS.

PARTNERSHIP AGENCIES

BRITISH TABLE TENNIS ASSOCIATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The British Table Tennis Association for people with Disabilities (BTTAD) was established in 1993 by a group of disabled players who wanted to develop table tennis and promote the sport to enable more disabled people to play the game.

The organisation is run by volunteers reliant on membership fees and donations and has the responsibility for organising and selecting the national squads for competitions - disabled players always compete as Great Britain, and receive their own world class funding from UK Sport.

BTTAD also run national competitions and organise the national ranking list. They also have the responsibility for disciplinary proceedings

In order to cement the links between the BTTAD and Table Tennis England members of BTTAD are invited to nominate one person per region to sit on the Table Tennis England Regional Committees. In addition each Table Tennis England region has the remit to ensure that annual regional championships and regular training camps are held.

ENGLISH FEDERATION OF DISABILITY SPORT

For many years disability specific sports organisations e.g. Cerebral Palsy Sport, UK Deaf Sport and Wheelpower (see appendices for the full list) in addition to the national governing bodies of sport had led the responsibility for developing sporting opportunities for disabled people. In order to make the whole system easier to understand and work with Sport England working with the disability sports organisations established a new 'one stop shop' agency for disability—the English Federation of

Disability Sport (EFDS).

EFDS key functions are:

1. The development of clear policies within disability sport
2. The increase of the involvement of disabled people in all aspects of their chosen sport
3. The raising of the profile of disabled people and their sporting needs
4. Effecting mainstreaming of sport within the governing bodies and ensuring inclusion.
6. The encouragement of local authorities to adopt more responsibilities for opportunities in sport for disabled people

DISABILITY SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

For information the major disability sports organisations are:

- CP Sport - for people with cerebral palsy, hold some training days and have their own World Games
- Wheelpower (formerly BWSF) - based at Stoke Mandeville Hospital
- BBS - British Blind Sport
- UK Deaf Sport - involved with sending hearing impaired players to World, European Games and Deaflympics,
- DSE - Disability Sport Events (formerly Disability Sport England) heavily involved with organising events with their own championships held annually in September
- Mencap Sport - (formerly English Sports Association for People with Learning Disabilities), hold regular training camps and competitions – now work closely with Special Olympics
- Les Autres - represent amputees
- Dwarf Sports Association UK

In addition there is the UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disabilities who organise international competitions with the INAS Fed the international body for learning disability sport.

TABLE TENNIS ENGLAND DISABILITY COMMITTEE

In October 2005 Table Tennis England set up a Forum with representatives from all the disability sports organisations invited to attend. As a result from 2006/7 the forum working together supported 4 major competitions to be known as Grand Prix events. This is a major step forward and it is hoped that the number of competitions for people with disabilities will be substantially improved and increased. In 2008 the Forum became part of the Table Tennis England structure as the Table Tennis England Disability Committee.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

Disability and the Equality Act 2010

From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), however, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination. It provides legal rights for disabled people in the areas of:

- Employment
- Education
- Access to goods, services and facilities including larger private clubs and land based transport services
- Buying and renting land or property
- Functions of public bodies, for example the issuing of licences

The Equality Act also provides rights for people not to be directly discriminated against or harassed because they have an association with a disabled person. This can apply to a carer or parent of a disabled person. In addition, people must not be directly discriminated against or harassed because they are wrongly perceived to be disabled.

More information about the Equality Act, and how you can obtain copies of the Act, can be found on the Government Equalities Office website.

The definition of 'disability' under the Equality Act 2010

In the Act, a person has a disability if:

- they have a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities

For the purposes of the Act, these words have the following meanings;

- 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial
- 'long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions)
- 'normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking and going shopping

People who have had a disability in the past that meets this definition are also protected by the Act.

Progressive conditions considered to be a disability

There are additional provisions relating to people with progressive conditions. People with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are protected by the Act from the point of diagnosis. People with some visual impairments are automatically deemed to be disabled.

Conditions that are specifically excluded

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as a tendency to set fires or addictions to non-prescribed substances. activities are open and accessible to all.

The provision of disabled access and services should be seen as an opportunity not an imposition!

In recent surveys it has been found that between 8.3 and 11.7 million people currently resident in the UK have a disability or illness that is covered by the Act, and further that 25% of UK households have a disabled member while 4% have a member who uses a wheelchair.

CHILD PROTECTION

The ETTA has a Child Protection Policy and Guidelines which is available either as a hard copy from the ETTA or in a downloadable format from the website. It is vitally important that all people working with disabled children and adults should have access to a copy of the guidelines. The policy is as follows:

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The aim of this policy is to promote good practice by ensuring that all Table Tennis England members:

- Are fully aware of their responsibilities with regard to child protection.
- Safeguard and promote the interests and well being of children with who they are working.
- Respond appropriately to concerns.
- Take all reasonable and practical steps to protect children from harm, discrimination or degrading treatment.
- Respect and promote children's rights, wishes and feelings.
- Make informed and confident responses to child protection issues.

The Table Tennis England Child Protection Policy and Guidelines will:

- Offer safeguards to children, coaches, staff, officials and volunteers.
- Help to maintain high standards of professionalism and practice at all levels of the sport.

Implementation procedures that demonstrate a commitment to:

- The provision of support, appropriate training (and updating) and adequate supervision of coaches, staff and members to enable them to work together with parents, coaches and other organisations to ensure that the welfare and needs of children remain paramount.

Table Tennis England believes in and seeks to uphold the following principles:

- The child's welfare is paramount.
- All children whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- Staff, officials and volunteers are not trained to decide whether abuse has occurred but are vested with the responsibility for ensuring that they act upon any concerns or allegations in relation to children/young people.
- That processes for dealing with complaints are fair and open to challenge through an appeals process.

The full Child Protection Policy and Guidelines booklet is available to download from the Table Tennis England website on www.tabletennisengland.co.uk

APPENDIX 1

POLYBAT—Information Pack

UPDATE ON POLYBAT

The game of POLYBAT was devised to accommodate the needs of young people with severe physical impairments – including muscle power, control and coordination difficulties e.g. muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy.

Using a table tennis table, PE Lecturer Doug Williamson and a team of students at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), developed the concept of an end-to-end hit and rally table top game. Over a period of time the game was refined to include the following features: wooden table sides to retain the ball and allow for rebound shots, a slower moving airflow ball (a soft golf practice ball), and adapted hitting bats. Basic rules were established e.g. the ball must remain on the table surface, can rebound from the sides and players may use multiple hits.

Despite the considerable early efforts of NTU and Disability Sport England (DSE) to build awareness, POLYBAT had not been developed to its full potential.

In 1999, thanks to a partnership involving the Youth Sport Trust (YST), the English Table Tennis Association (ETTA) and the NTU – with full support from the Camelot Foundation, the independent charitable trust, - the more formal aspects of development i.e. support, competition, coaching and organisation is available.

As a result of the efforts of Ken Black, at the time YST's Disability Sport Officer, POLYBAT has been included as one of the games in YST's SportSability bag (produced by Davies – the Sports People). Included are plastic sides, clips, bats, balls and grip strapping, coaching resource cards and guidance notes for teachers. Clearly the DIY days of POLYBAT are over! The main aim of the games included in SportSability (Boccia, Table Cricket, Table Hockey and Goalball) is to provide meaningful opportunities for young people – particularly those with high support needs who may have been excluded from games programmes.

The Camelot Foundation, working in partnership with the YST, ETTA and NTU have enabled this scheme to roll out nationwide. Specifically, 1500 sets of POLYBAT have been distributed to special schools throughout the UK. Traditional competitions organised by DSE at the annual Mini and Junior Games have been continued.

Along with these impressive distribution plans Table Tennis England, in association with the British Table Tennis Association for people with Disabilities (BTTAD) have officially recognised POLYBAT as a table tennis based game. As POLYBAT is being developed within the mainstream national governing body of sport its impact has increased.

Table Tennis England promotes POLYBAT, not only as a game in its own right, but also as a coaching tool

for both disabled and mainstream players – particularly very young children. Table Tennis England launched the programme, **PREMIER CLUB 'ABILITY'** in 2000, which aims to promote and support work with disabled people through mainstream clubs. It is hoped that the initiative, which also includes Polybat, will continue to encourage greater numbers of disabled people to participate in both table tennis and Polybat throughout the country.

The efforts of Table Tennis England and the YST to promote POLYBAT will help the game reach its full potential, as envisaged by those who have been involved with POLYBAT throughout the past 12 years.

In May 2002, Table Tennis England with YST and NTU launched the POLYBAT Skills Awards Scheme which is proving popular with schools using the Sportsability equipment.

Game kits are available to purchase from Davies (0870 6000 195). For further information on POLYBAT contact Steven McFadyen, Clubs & Disability Officer on steven.mcfadyen@tabletennisengland.co.uk

Please note: If used in part for any publication, authorisation/permission must be obtained from YST, Table Tennis England, NTU.

POLYBAT DEVELOPMENT

With the partnership between Table Tennis England, YST, NTU and DSE it gives those involved with table tennis the opportunity to use another developmental tool to promote our sport. The game of POLYBAT has a number of similarities to the mainstream game i.e.:

- It is played on a table tennis table.
- The scoring is the same as the mainstream game.
- Basic hitting movements are the same as table tennis.

Due to these similarities there are a number of areas the Table Tennis England development team can be promoting not only POLYBAT but also mainstream table tennis:

- ✓ Tracking the geographic location of SportSability bags.
- ✓ Using the bags to allow clubs to build links with special schools.
- ✓ Encouraging coaches to work with special schools.
- ✓ Including POLYBAT in competitions.

SportSability is a physical activity programme developed by the Youth Sport Trust in conjunction with disability organisations, intended for use within schools for young disabled people, particularly those with high support needs, who may have previously excluded from school games programmes. POLYBAT equipment is included in the SportSability bags.

Once the children have been encouraged to try POLYBAT then the majority can be supported to move into the mainstream game. POLYBAT may also be used in the following ways:

- Building the confidence of disabled players.
- Improving hand/eye/ball coordination.

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- Building the confidence of disabled players.
- Improving hand/eye/ball coordination.

In order that coaches are able to use POLYBAT there is a session included within Table Tennis England's Basic Disability Awareness Training.

POLYBAT is included within some of the disabled regional competitions currently organised by Disability Sport England. In addition SINCE 1999 it has also been included in:

- ✓ The National Junior Wheelchair Games.
- ✓ Disability open days organised by a number of local authorities across England.
- ✓ The Sussex Millennium Youth Games included Polybat as an event.
- ✓ Table Tennis England **Premier Club 'Ability'** programme.
- ✓ Wolverhampton Youth Games.
- ✓ In 2002 Table Tennis England launched the Polybat Skills Award Scheme.
- ✓ In May 2003 Polybat was included at the Cadbury's Get Active Festival held at the NEC in Birmingham where some 12,000 people entered into the activities on display.
- ✓ Also in May 2003 the Gentlemen's Night Out Charity donated £3,000 towards Table Tennis England for further development of the Skills Award Scheme.

On each occasion the event has been supported by development work and the interest in table tennis and Polybat by teachers, disability group organisers and local authorities has been very high with requests for more information and help from Table Tennis England.

Readers may also be interested to learn of the experience of the English and Welsh Cricket Board. NTU also devised a game of Table Cricket, which they worked with for a number of years. In 1998 Cricket decided to adopt the adapted game and promote it within the mainstream game, as a result they have received tremendous support and secured a massive sponsorship deal to allow them to run a competition parallel to the World Cup in 1999 with schools from all over the country competing in the Table Cricket World Cup. The final was played at Lords. This has now become an annual event.

In conclusion, having looked at POLYBAT, talked to players and coaches, and compared similar disabled adapted sports within other governing bodies, it would appear that POLYBAT should be receiving a far higher profile within table tennis. It is a very valuable coaching and promotional tool that needs to be exploited to its full potential. If this is achieved I believe it will have an extremely advantageous result in the numbers of disabled players participating in table tennis. As a sport we need to be actively promoting table tennis and using all the tools at our disposal to halt the decline in playing numbers. POLYBAT is a means to make a difference and encourage greater numbers of disabled players to "come and try", who might otherwise have never had the opportunity or the confidence to play table tennis.

This increase in numbers will not only reflect in the overall membership of Table Tennis England but also provide additional income through membership fees.

HOW TO PLAY POLYBAT

It is intended that POLYBAT be used as:

- A developmental tool.
- A game in its own right.

Please read this section in conjunction with the rules attached:

- POLYBAT can be played as either singles or doubles.
- The scoring system is exactly the same as for mainstream table tennis.
- Play always begins with the server, who can play the ball of any side, strokes can then be played directly or off the sides. The ball must stay on the table surface.
- The aim of the game is to hit the ball over the opponent's end of the table, or cause them to play a fault by lifting the ball off the table surface.
- Players can hit the ball more than once before returning it to their opponent.
- Players may not trap the ball with the hand or bat.

When using POLYBAT as a coaching tool you may need to:

- Use a larger ball to slow the game down.
- Reduce the width of the table by adding short plastic sides to the end of the table.
- Allow some players to serve direct to the opponent.
- Where wheelchair users are playing against ambulant players they should play from a seated position.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure the lower limbs of wheelchair users do not rub against the table.
- The game can be very fast and absorbing so check for signs of fatigue.
- Ensure each player, particularly in doubles play, has sufficient personal space.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

POLYBAT supports the current National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Games. Teachers have also found it an effective way of including cross curricular links with other subjects.

POLYBAT RULES

1. EQUIPMENT

- 1.1 The table should be a standard table tennis type with appropriate suitable legs position for wheelchair users.
- 1.2 The sides should be safely secured to the table, 10cm high, and encroach no more than 3.5cm

towards the table centre.

- 1.3 The bat should be made of wood or plastic to a maximum length of 30cm, including the handle, which may be at the end or the centre of the bat, provided that the total hitting surface area does not exceed 180cm. The edges of the bat should be rounded and covered with foam/felt/velcro to protect the table surface. Handles/gloves/strapping may have specific variations to facilitate the grip for individuals.
- 1.4 The ball used should be a soft plastic airflow golf practice type (low bounce) with no bias in its roll or rebound, and should be white or orange in colour with a matt finish.

2. SERVICE

- 2.1 For all classes the ball should be hit from a stationary position on the centre line of the table no nearer to the centre of the table than one bat's length from the end line, the action should be a discrete movement with no balking action.
- 2.2 During service players must strike the ball to hit against any side panel.
- 2.3 The receiver must allow the ball to strike the side panel before attempting to return it.

3. THE ORDER OF PLAY

- 3.1 In singles the server shall first make a good service, the receiver shall then make a good return and thereafter server and receiver alternately shall each make a good return.
- 3.2 In doubles, the server shall first make a good service to the receiver, diagonally opposite, who shall then make a good return. Players may then hit the ball in any order or any number of times successively.

4. A LET

- 4.1 The rally shall be a let:
 - a) if the service is delivered when the receiving player or pair is not ready, provided that neither the receiver nor his partner attempts to hit it.
 - b) if play is interrupted by the umpire or assistant umpire.
 - c) if, at the umpire's discretion, the ball is caused to be lifted by a defect of the table or sides.
- 4.2 Play may be interrupted:
 - a) to correct an error in the order of serving, receiving or ends.
 - b) to warn or penalise a player.
 - c) because the conditions of play are disturbed in a way which could affect the outcome of the rally.

5. A POINT

- 5.1 Unless the rally is a let, a player shall score a point:
 - a) if his/her opponent fails to make a good service.
 - b) if his/her opponent fails to make a good return.
 - c) if his/her opponent, or anything his opponent wears or carries, moves the playing surface.
- 5.2 A player shall lose a point if:
 - a) he/she lifts the ball so that it bounces in his/her opponent's half of the table.
 - b) a lifted/bouncing ball goes over or off any sides (panels or ends) of the table.

- c) the ball is stopped/trapped stationary during a hit, block or manipulation movement.
 - d) the ball strikes any part of the player's body.
- 5.3 A player is allowed multiple manipulations before returning the ball. However, this must not constitute a clear advantage by replicating the service situation. Any purposeful stop/start play can be called a fault by the umpire.
- 5.4 A player may touch the playing surface in order to regain their balance during a rally subject to rule 5.2 (d).

6. A GAME

- 6.1 A game shall be won by the player or pair first scoring 11 points unless both players or pairs score 10 points, when the game shall be won by the player or pair first scoring subsequently 2 points more than the opposing player or pair.

7. A MATCH

- 7.1 A match shall consist of the best of 5 games.
- 7.2 Play shall be continuous throughout a match except that any player shall be entitled to an interval of not more than 2 minutes between successive games.

8. THE CHOICE OF SERVING, RECEIVING AND ENDS

- 8.1 The right to choose the initial order of serving, receiving and ends shall be decided by lot, and the winner may choose to serve or to receive first or to start at a particular end.
- 8.2 When one player or pair has chosen to serve, to receive or to start at a particular end, then the other player or pair shall have the other choice.
- 8.3 After every 2 points have been scored, the receiving player or pair shall become the serving player or pair and so on until the end of the game, unless both players or pairs have scored 10 when the sequence of serving and receiving shall be the same but each player shall serve for only 1 point in turn.
- 8.4 In each game of a doubles match, the pair having the right to serve first shall choose which of them shall do so, and in the first game of a match the receiving pair shall decide which of them shall receive first; in subsequent games of the match, the first server having been chosen, the first receiver shall be the player who served to him in the preceding game.
- 8.5 In doubles at each change of service the previous receiver shall become the server, and the partner of the previous server shall become the receiver.
- 8.6 The player or pair serving first in a game shall receive first in the next game of the match, and, in the last possible game of a doubles match, the pair due to receive next shall change their order of receiving when the first pair scores 5.
- 8.7 The player or pair starting at one end in a game shall start the other end in the next game of the match, and, in the last possible game of a match, the players or pairs shall change ends when the first player or pair scores 5 points.

9. OUT OF ORDER OF SERVICE, RECEIVING OR ENDS

- 9.1 If a player serves or receives out of turn, play shall be interrupted by the umpire as soon as the error is discovered, and shall resume with those players serving and receiving who should be server and receiver respectively at the score that has been reached, according to the sequence established at the beginning of the match, and in doubles, to the order of serving chosen by the pair having the right to serve first in the game during which the error is discovered.

- 9.2 If the players have not changed ends when they should have done so, play shall be interrupted by the umpire as soon as the error is discovered and shall resume with the players at the ends at which they should be at the score that has been reached, according to the sequence established at the beginning of the match.
- 9.3 In any circumstances, all points scored before the discovery of an error shall be reckoned.

10 SPECTATORS, COACHES AND ESCORTS

- 10.1 Players may receive advice only during the intervals between games or during other authorised suspension of play from one person, designated beforehand to the umpire, except in doubles where each player may designate an adviser.
- 10.2 All individuals other than the players and umpire must remain away from the playing area so as not to influence or impede play unless instructed by the umpire.

11. DEFINITIONS

- 11.1 A rally is the period during which the ball is in play.
- 11.2 The ball is in play from the last moment it is stationary on the central line of the table before being hit.
- 11.3 A let is a rally of which the result is not scored.
- 11.4 A point is a rally of which the result is scored.
- 11.5 The server is the player due to strike the ball first in a rally.
- 11.6 The receiver is the player due to strike the ball second in a rally.
- 11.7 The umpire is the person appointed to control a match.

12. CLASSIFICATION

- 12.1 The aim of classification is to:
- a) preserve a balanced sporting contest.
 - b) maintain the dignity of the individuals involved.
 - c) Be appropriate for the situation i.e. some competitions may only require an informal assessment by the organiser.

12.2 PROCEDURE

The main criteria for placing a participant in one of the four competition classes is the set of functional descriptions of each profile as per the attached document.

- a) for UK participants and their coaches Disability Sport England (DSE) profiles can be used as a basic guide to the four classes.
- b) if there is any doubt about a player's classification they should always be placed in the higher class and marked for observation.
- c) for doubles competitions the organiser shall decide which combinations of classes will be used.
- b) for all competitions the minimum ability is that which allows a player to participate in rallies with dignity, the maximum ability should not be equal to that of a recreational table tennis player.

POLYBAT FUNCTIONAL PROFILES

These profiles relate to physical impairments, for other groups with impairments i.e. learning disability,

hearing impairment etc. suitable competition profiles are currently being developed.

PB1

1. Players have difficulty in covering the width of the table in defence and may not be able to regain their upright playing position for their next stroke.
2. Players may not be able to orientate the bat to the table so that the ball is often lifted causing bouncing and resulting in weak returns.
3. These players play a predominantly 'response' and 'defensive' game without basic strong directed shots.
4. Players often have difficulties in anticipating the path of the ball and need to slow the ball before returning it.

CRITERIA FOR THE CLASS

- a) Reach/range of movement across the table is limited; returns often lack length/strength; controlling the ball is a challenge; the characteristic game 'tempo' is sedate.
- b) All players must participate seated even if not wheelchair users.
- c) DSE equivalent profiles for this functional class 1,2,3,4,5,12.

PB2

1. The players in this class are mostly able to reach forwards and across the table width and anticipate returns.
2. Players are able to control the angle of the bat to the table to eliminate bouncing of the ball and produce controlled rebound shots.
3. Players can read the basic game and rely upon both defensive and offensive strokes.
4. Participants have a relatively strong serve in contrast to their other strokes.

CRITERIA FOR THE CLASS

- a) They have a dominant backhand or forehand stroke; engage in strong purposeful rallies; the characteristic 'tempo' of the game is dynamic and rushed.
- b) Players only participate standing if their abilities fit the above functional profile – they cannot gain an advantage with reach (very few will be able to play standing).
- c) DSE equivalent profiles for the functional class 1,2,3,4,5,12,13.

PB3

1. Participants are able to play coordinated strokes with controlled pace and direction.
2. They are able to read the game tactically and turn defensive play into attack by using a combination of forehand and backhand strokes.
3. Competitors are able to play a faster rally with overall control.
4. Players are able to control the speed and direction of rebound shots.

CRITERIA FOR THE CLASS

- a) Able to anticipate the path of the ball; identify opponent's weaknesses and attack them consistently; the characteristic 'tempo' of the game is one of tactical rallies.

- b) Players only participate standing if their abilities fit the above functional profiles – they cannot gain an advantage with reach.
- c) DSE equivalent profiles 6,7,8,14 (standing), 17 (seated or standing), 31 (seated or standing).

PB4

1. Players have challenges which are observable in one or more of the following aspects – coordination – body, limbs, hand – arm manipulation, perception – which would make even recreational table tennis impossible.
2. Balance challenges are often evident so table support can be necessary.
3. Being ambulant they can reach with control to stroke the ball early.
4. A key aspect in rallies is that they are able to sustain the fast rally.

CRITERIA FOR CLASS

- a) Ambulant movement allows for good early defence and offensive reactions; reach combined with the movement of the bat produces fast powerful strokes; the characteristic ‘tempo’ of the game is often extremely fast with changing angles and reaction shots.
- b) Only standing players participate.
- c) DSE equivalent profiles 15,18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, 29.

Note: a proportion of individuals in the upper ability levels of this profile will have too much function to qualify for Polybat competitions and should be encouraged to participate in table tennis.