

# **New Paralympic Sports Club Opens Its Doors in Norwich**

A brand new sports club is set to open on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 6.30-8.30pm at the Norman Centre in Norwich. The new club, the Norfolk and Norwich Goalball Team is a club for people aged 14+ with visual impairments, their families and friends who would like to get involved in either playing, coaching or officiating.

Goalball is a fast, exciting and energetic Paralympic sport played with an audible ball, tactile markings and some rather tenacious attacking and defensive moves. No past experience of the sport is needed, just a willingness to have a go, learn and most importantly have fun!

During the sessions the qualified coaches will also be offering fitness work at the Norman Centre's all inclusive gym to help with fitness and conditioning. Nick Clarke, head coach, said, "Goalball is not only a way to get fit, competitive and learn a new sport but also to meet and socialise with the other players and above all to have fun. The hope is to get the sessions to run every other week and too also play some competitive matches with surrounding county teams, I'm sure we have some Goalball Paralympians out there in Norfolk they just need to come and have a go!"

For more information please call Nick Clarke on 07881 900375 or email:

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## **Background Information**

Goalball was introduced to the world at the 1976 Paralympics in Toronto, Canada and the first world Championships were held in Austria in 1978.

The rules were formalised by the International Blind Sports Association in 1981 and the first European Championships were held in 1983. Since this time, Goalball has increased in popularity and is now played across all continents of the world. Since 1976 Goalball has been a Paralympic sport and is enjoyed by the visually impaired community world wide. British Goalball should benefit from the Paralympics games in 2012 which are being held in London.

## **What is Goalball?**

Goalball is a three-a-side team game developed for visually impaired players, but individuals with full sight can also play.

Goalball has three main features, which distinguish it from games played by sighted people.

- The ball contains internal bells, which enable players to hear and locate it during play.
- The game is played on an indoor court or play area, with tactile markings to enable players to determine where they are on court.
- All players wear eyeshades to ensure that everyone plays on an equal sight level.

## **Objectives of the Game**

The game is played indoors, in silence on a court 18m x9m (the size of a volleyball court) so that players can hear the ball. The object of the game is to score against the opposition who are defending the width of the court behind them. Rules stipulating that the ball must touch the floor ensure that it is generally skimmed across the surface, and not thrown high through the air. The other team aim to defend the shot using their hearing to guide them.

For more information please visit [www.goalball.co.uk](http://www.goalball.co.uk)