

Partially sighted - Support card

No two partially sighted players have the same level of vision, as there are many sight loss conditions. Get to know the person to understand their motivations, how the condition affects them and what support they might need. Never assume what a player can and cannot see.

What do we mean by partially sighted?

People with a sight loss condition can be categorised as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted). Somebody who is partially sighted will have some level of sight and have a sight classification of B2, B3, B4 or B5.

Football pathways

Partially sighted players can play mainstream, pan-disability and partially sighted football. Partially sighted football is an adapted version of futsal and is sometimes called B2/B3 football

General characteristics

- Be aware that some partially sighted players' vision may vary from day to day and at different times of day.
- Some partially sighted players are known to have a sensitivity to bright light.
- Some partially sighted players have less developed gross motor skills that will affect their balance when performing activities. As a result, some partially sighted players can seem to be clumsier than the general population.
- Some partially sighted players may appear less confident or less motivated to explore new environments.
- Some partially sighted players may have difficulties in orientation during an activity.
- Some partially sighted players may have less developed social skills as they are not able to assess and understand non-verbal communication.
- Some partially sighted players employ a greater cognitive load before a session (travelling to a session) or during a session (constant monitoring of orientation) that can lead to tiredness and cognitive fatigue.
- Players with a detached retina could be at risk of further detachment if they experience blows to the head. Therefore, these players should avoid heading the ball and gain medical advice regarding safe activities.
- Players with glaucoma should gain medical advice regarding activities which require exertion.

Coaching considerations

- Choose an appropriate venue – ideally indoors, in a well-lit venue. If outside, be aware of light variations such as floodlit areas of the pitch in winter.
- Use contrasting equipment to make it easier for objects to be identified – the ball and bibs should contrast from the floor, the surrounding walls, and each other. Consider using high contrast hazard tape on goal posts to make them easier to identify.
- Players may have more difficulties learning from imitation or demonstrations, especially from distance. Use clear verbal instructions and allow time for information to be processed.
- Be patient and ensure verbal communication is concise, accurate, and understood. Be aware that some partially sighted players may not understand certain descriptions, this could be due to gaps in knowledge or lack of reference to certain shapes and actions.
- Use individuals' names when communicating to avoid confusion.
- Try to establish if there is a preferred position to communicate with a player. For example, if a player has no sight in a particular area, a small change in your position can make a big difference.
- Eliminate noise distractions wherever possible.
- Allow time prior to a session for players to orientate themselves in a venue and pinpoint dangers such as slippery surfaces, doorways and any obstacles.
- Do not leave equipment on the floor where it can be a hazard.
- Avoid standing with your back to the sun as the reflection will make it difficult for a partially sighted player to see you.
- You may need to be more tactile with the person to aid explanations and understanding, but always ask permission first.
- Players may tire more quickly from increased cognitive load so adopt shorter work intervals with longer rests.



Don't forget the golden nugget – Make sure your environment is always a safe and welcoming place to be!

How do I use STEP to adapt my session to include partially sighted players?



Space – Be mindful of hazards and obstructions not just on the pitch, but on the outside, run-offs, and periphery of your session.



Task – Play short duration games to help with physical and cognitive fatigue.



Equipment – Ensure there is a strong contrast between the colour of the ball, the pitch surface, and any surrounding walls (if indoors). Use high contrast hazard tape on goal posts to make them easier to identify.



Players – Consider how far away players can perceive a ball approaching, and also 'where' in their field of vision.

Step top tip:

Remember: STEP is a tool to help you coach, NOT a list of things you have to do. In order to use STEP effectively, it's essential you get to know your players so you can use the right modification at the right time to aid their development.

Additional resources

- England Football Website: Disability Section
- Disability Football Introduction Course
- British Blind Sport Education Resources
- British Blind Sport – Classification Information
- UK Coaching: Coaching People with a Visual Impairment E-module