



# WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL SPORT REVIEW PROPOSAL

PREPARED BY British Wheelchair Basketball | October 2019

## CYCLE TWO

### SUMMARY

This proposal has been prepared by British Wheelchair Basketball (BWB), the National Governing Body for Wheelchair Basketball in Great Britain. The purpose of this proposal is to provide a rationale for the inclusion of wheelchair basketball into the BUCS Competition Programme, becoming the first fully inclusive team sport. The proposal takes into account the strategic alignment of both bodies, resource implication and wider impact of introducing wheelchair basketball into the BUCS framework, using qualitative and quantitative data to validate the proposal.

The proposal seeks to:

1. Adopt BWB's current 5v5 University competition into the BUCS Competition Programme.
2. Reposition BWB's University Championships as an open entry 3X3 annual tournament to lower resource challenges for Universities.

It is widely documented that people with a disability would like more opportunities to participate alongside non-disabled people in sport ([http://www.mixedabilitysports.org/wp-content/uploads/MASDP\\_EvaluationReport2019.pdf](http://www.mixedabilitysports.org/wp-content/uploads/MASDP_EvaluationReport2019.pdf)). Practicing the notion of 'Reverse Inclusion', wheelchair basketball identifies the Wheelchair as a piece of sporting equipment (no different to a canoe or bicycle) that allows all ages, genders, abilities and disabilities to compete on a level playing field. Rather than including people with disabilities in mainstream activities (usually with adaptive equipment or timed events), wheelchair basketball includes everyone in the same activity, under the same rules and regulations, placing the disabled person at the heart of the sport. Wheelchair basketball's inclusion extends to providing a single sporting environment where all genders can compete alongside and against each other.

### WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL IS OPEN TO EVERYONE

The proposal focuses on the following:

- Breaking down stereotypes and perceptions of disability sport
- Inclusive competition; disabled and non-disabled
- Mixed gender
- No formal classification or eligibility
- Scalability – platform for growth and development of rules
- Opportunities for all BUCS Athlete Types

Embedding Wheelchair Basketball into the BUCS competition programme will promote inclusivity and participation, helping to increase the profile of the sport directly following the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics.

The proposal is developed to support existing wheelchair basketball programmes to develop, whilst encouraging new university clubs and teams to access the sport at their desired level.

Existing Wheelchair Basketball Teams – the proposal allows teams to continue at their current competitive level at 5v5 in the same structure to the current BWB University League, with the finals following through into standard BUCS playoffs and finals format. The structure also allows for progression in tiered leagues when the participation base and standards dictate the need. The additional benefit of an annual competition in the format of 3X3 will be available to provide alternative and/or additional competition.

New and Developing Wheelchair Basketball Teams – the proposal seeks to remove resource barriers and provide support to develop sustainable wheelchair basketball teams with the introduction of the 3X3 University Championships. This annual tournament will reduce the number of participants and equipment required to participate than the traditional 5v5 format and allow BWB to provide access to wheelchairs on the day if required for Universities without access to equipment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Embracing change and unlocking the potential of Wheelchair Basketball underpins the clearly defined strategic direction of British Wheelchair Basketball (BWB).

The 2019-2024 strategy has been developed over a period of unprecedented success for British Wheelchair Basketball, with GB squads holding 2 of 4 World Titles, with the senior European Championships and the domestic competitive game being regularly broadcast via mainstream media to growing audiences.

Whilst the new strategic direction for the organisation will see the sport drive ground-breaking changes to disability sport, the lifeblood of the sport and its passion for transforming lives remains at its heart. The ability to provide life changing experiences through the unique inclusive nature of the sport is intrinsically reinforced by the values instilled throughout the organisation and the sport as a whole.



**Diagram 1 BWB's Vision, Values and Mission 2019-2024**

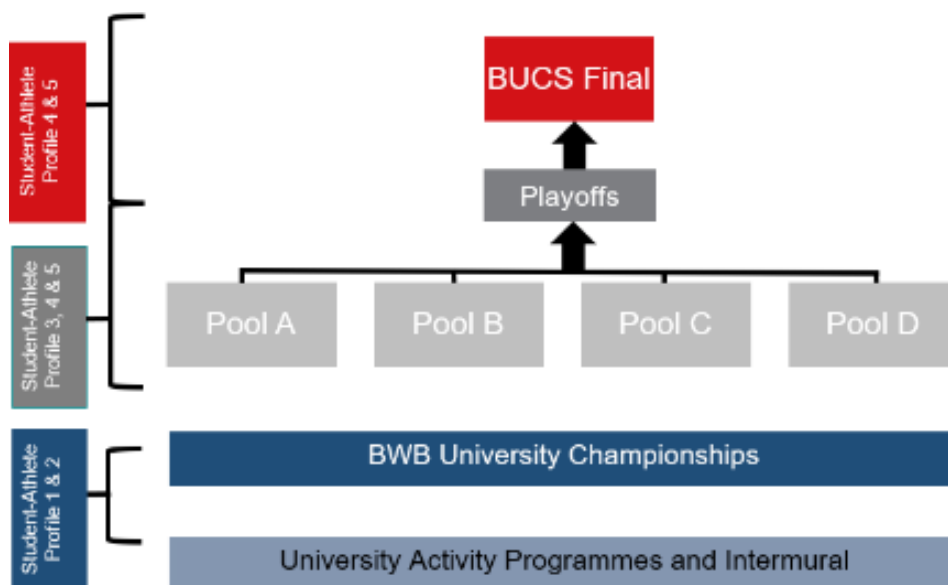
The focus on the core delivery areas of the sport, which is reflected in the sports brand and depiction of the blades within the BWB logo, ensuring all elements equally recognised in the new direction of the sport and organisation.

- Double Participation – Attract and retain new participants, Coaches, Leaders and Officials
- Domestic Professional League – enable the formation of local leagues, generate more professional playing opportunities and delivering a professional league which attracts and retains the best talent in the world
- World Class High Performance System – Realise World, Paralympic, European and Commonwealth medal success, and develop a world leading GB Academy
- World Leading Governing Body – Through attracting new investment into the sport, growing new audiences and facilitating the digitalisation of the sport

A partnership with BUCS and inclusion into the BUCS competition framework clearly contributes to all of BWB's strategic themes.

## **Proposal**

The proposed structure for competition in 2020-21 is outlined in **Diagram 2**.



**Diagram 2 - Proposed structure for University Wheelchair Basketball 2020-21**

### Phased Approach and Scalability

BWB proposes a phased approach to developing the BUCS League structure, with a one-division structure initially implemented for the first 1-2 seasons. Following this, the proposal is to develop the structure to better provide for different levels of the sport.

A BUCS Premier Division can be developed over time with slightly stronger eligibility around classification of athletes in order to cater for the more competitive teams within the programme.

## **Basic Regulations:**

### BUCS Wheelchair Basketball League

Format – 5v5, 40 minute games, 4 quarters, 10ft hoops, full size basketball court, teams of 12 max

Timings – Weekend fixtures

Location – Round Robin hosted in turn by Universities

Player Eligibility – Minimum of one disabled athlete on court (lower limb impairment declared eligible by BWB Eligibility Panel)

Cross Team Eligibility – The current BWB '25% rule' allowing for teams to provide competition for disabled athletes from non-competing Universities will be reviewed during implementation phase.

Coach – Teams will be required to have a minimum 1 x Licensed Level 2 Coach who is also DBS checked

### BWB 3X3 University Championships

Format – 3X3, 10ft hoops, full size basketball court, teams of 5 max

Timings – March, Weekend 1 day

Location – National Venue – TBC annually

Player Eligibility – minimum of one disabled athlete on court (lower limb impairment, self-declaration)

BWB will deliver the one-day 3X3 competition annually in order to provide an accessible developmental opportunity for teams looking to try the sport in a more relaxed format with less commitment.

The Championships will be a fun and relaxed environment in the new 3X3 format, reducing equipment strain and participation numbers to help developing University Wheelchair Basketball programmes enter the competition.

BWB will aim to support universities to develop their wheelchair basketball offer and step onto more formal BUCS competition from here.

#### **Further considerations:**

**Facilities** – Wheelchair Basketball is played on a full-sized basketball court, with exactly the same court requirements. BWB recommends the use of a sprung wooden floor for competitive games but does make allowances in certain circumstances. The only other considerations for including wheelchair basketball in existing facilities is the off-court provision such as accessible toilets and parking.

**Timings** – the pool phase aspect of the BUCS leagues will take place with rounds being hosted by entrants in November, and two rounds in January/February ahead of the knockout stage and finals

**Pool Rounds** – Universities will have the responsibility of organising and hosting one round of fixtures with two teams travelling at each round of fixtures. Appointing their own table officials, with BWB appointing referees centrally. BUCS/BWB will set specific dates for rounds to be played, ensuring minimal clashes with national league competitions.

**Equipment** – All universities with teams will be required to have their own playing equipment; balls, chairs, playing kit and table officials equipment such as scoresheets, foul paddles and air horns. BWB's Engagement Manager will support newly formed clubs and societies initially to secure access to equipment if required. BWB will provide balls and table equipment at the University Championship Finals.

**Officials** – BWB utilises the same qualification/equipment and training programme as Basketball for Table Officials, meaning any university with an existing BUCS basketball team will have a pool of Table Officials that are well placed to service additional wheelchair basketball games. The payment of the Officials is the responsibility of the home team.

Referees require a separate wheelchair basketball qualification, which can be delivered as a 'Conversion Course' for existing basketball referees or as a standalone qualification for new recruits in order to ensure more locally available referees to reduce travel expenses. BWB will however appoint Referees centrally to all games to aid the load on Referees and ensure appropriate cover. BWB will be looking to work with universities to recruit and train more potential Referees with the view to allowing Universities to appoint their own referees in the longer term

**Coaches** – Wheelchair Basketball offers a stand-alone qualification in Coaching at Level 1 and 2. This qualification is on the Ofqual framework and available to deliver in house from January 2020. Leaders Awards are also available to provide an introduction to leading inclusive activity.

#### **Setting up a University Team -**

Setting up a wheelchair basketball team is no different to setting up a team in any other sport. Having access to equipment, coaching and promotion of the club is key to a sustainable structure.

BWB is developing some easy to follow Toolkits to give support on setting up a club. BWB can facilitate relationships with Clubs who have stocks of wheelchairs and coaches who can support the development of university teams and provide coaching support.

BWB's Participation Wheelchair is available at the cost effective price of £729 +VAT per wheelchair and can be purchased here <https://rmasport.com/product/basketball-club-wheelchair/>

Sport England Small Grants is an ideal source of grant funding to help kick start a University Club development. BWB an support with applications and development plans to ensure long term sustainability.

## **2. PURPOSE**

BWB's University Championships has been in existence since 2014, where the competition began as an annual open entry 5v5 competition.

Since the development of the BWB University Championships over the years, there has been a sustained level of participation throughout the HE sector, and consequently an increase in the number of young people (aged

16-25) where we are currently engaging over 300 participants in both structured competition and training environments per year.

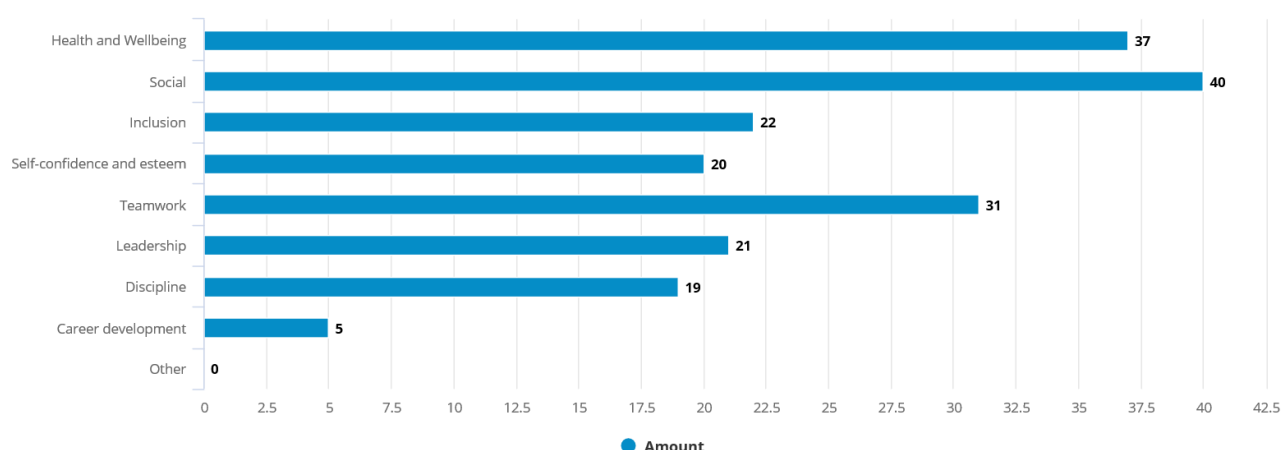
A review completed in 2017 recommended to separate the competition structure based on geographical area – therefore the pools were split into North, Central and South. Each pool consisted of three/four teams. Each team hosted a home round and attended two away rounds. Once all rounds are completed, the qualifying teams progress to the final 8 playoffs at the BWB University Championships.

As this is the case, there is clearly still a need for a more informal participation opportunity with less commitment for those developing institutions, as well as a more structured regular competition.

However, in line with the BUCS Sport Review Proposal process, we have identified further needs within the programme that will enhance the BWB University offer.

## Research

In reviewing, planning and developing the new competition structure, a participant and university consultation survey has been completed. Insight and information gathering has been received by 5/16 (32%) universities and from 47/143 (33%) individual student participants. 63% of participants highlighted that they do not participate in any other sport at university and that wheelchair basketball has had a significant benefit to them as individuals, please see diagram 3.



Importantly, 67% of the participants that completed the consultation stated that they were disabled and 42% stated that they have a classification within the sport meaning that they could progress through the community player pathway.

**Diagram 3 – Benefits to Participants**

Using the information collated as part of the participation survey, we have established that:

1. There is an appetite for inclusive team sport in a university setting.
2. The majority of the participants surveyed consider themselves to be disabled – 67%.
3. 63% do not play any other sport in university
4. 63% see themselves as competitive wheelchair basketball players.
5. 76% would like to participate in more competitive opportunities in a university setting.
6. Students believe they benefit positively from playing wheelchair basketball in a university setting.

In addition to the information gathered in the survey, we know the following about formal participation in the 2019-20 Season (university reported data):

- 115 Athletes participated in our University Championships 2018-19
- 329 Athletes are regularly participating in Wheelchair Basketball in the University setting
- 94 of the 329 athletes consider themselves to have a disability (29%)
- Within this, 64% are male and 36% are female

From this, we can ascertain that the University Championships has a higher concentration of disabled people competing than our wider university participation within the sector, but that the sport also attracts people that are not active in other sports outside of their wheelchair basketball activity.

## Qualitative Feedback

Within the qualitative feedback that was gathered during our survey, we found a large amount of feedback on the differing standards within the current BWB League and generally people who are new to the sport feeling that large score margins when playing against more established and experienced teams are not conducive to a positive playing environment.

Taking this feedback on board is vital to a successful competition moving forward. It is clearly important to provide the opportunity to progress tiered levels of competition to promote a more engaging and challenging competition for all levels of ability when the participation base allows.

### 3. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The proposed changes strategically align with the following strands of the BUCS Strategy:

**Inter University Sport** – We are seeking to add a competition opportunity for member institutions. This will be in the form of regionalised pools or events organised with universities that will lead these opportunities.

**Social & Recreational Sport** – The new competition programme will be attractive to some students who want to take part in competition but with a more recreational experience.

**Professional & Workforce Development** – Universities will be given the opportunity to upskill students and existing Basketball workforce through the delivery of wheelchair basketball coaching and refereeing qualifications providing CPD opportunities for students and staff whilst also supporting the development of student sport.

**Profile and Influence** – BWB aims to increase the number of university wheelchair basketball teams and are keen to use the BUCS competition structures to grow the profile of our sports in the sector. There is a huge opportunity in the next season in the lead up to, and off the back of, the Paralympic Games in Tokyo 2020, where wheelchair basketball is a main sport with GB Men and Women amongst the favourites to medal. We will be running a participation campaign alongside this media spotlight to encourage more participation into the sport in all sectors as well as highlight those GB Players that might currently be in the university sector studying.

As we work towards developing a Professional League by 2024, as outlined in our Strategic plan, universities will play a vital role in the development of franchises. Following good practice from other team sports such as Netball and Basketball, the synergy to develop these Professional League opportunities in the sector is clear and will help all parties deliver their strategic outcomes.

**Inclusion** – Allowing mixed gender, disabled and non-disabled people playing on the same team, wheelchair basketball would be the most inclusive sport within the BUCS Programme, allowing opportunities for participants to play with their peers regardless of their ability or gender.

**Performance Pathway** - Provision of a quality pathway, to ensure that athletes are supported in their development through the pathway up to senior squad in the best way possible, receiving the education on and off the court. As part of the pathway, BWB are implementing an Academy system, which has holistic development of athletes at its core, that includes developing Academy sessions across the UK, enabling athletes to develop a dual career pathway. The HE Sector already engages with a number of athletes on the pathway, and within the GB teams, and we aim to continue working with Performance Directors to strengthen partnerships.

### 4. CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT

There are several routes through which we have consulted in preparing this proposal:

- One to one discussions with university teams.
- Online questionnaire with all university team contacts – June 2019
- Face to face consultation process through our annual coach and referee conference.
- Online questionnaire promoted on social media and directly to individual participants – June 2019
- GB Performance team consultation

Feedback from the consultation of the 2017-18 University Championships – Participants Survey highlighted that the new format of regionalise pools followed by Finals enables more opportunities for people to play competitively.

As a sport, BWB is in a very strong position to be able to have significant impact on the delivery of physical activity for disabled people within the sector. Our BWB University Championships 2019 – Participation Survey

evidences that, 52% of our participants had never played wheelchair basketball prior to participating in university, with 63% did not participate in any other sport. This figure has gradually increased over recent years.

In addition, of the 48% of students that had played prior to the University Championships, 11% were currently engaged in the Great Britain performance pathway, seven of which had competed at a major international competition in the past two years.

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

### **BUCS**

Implications for BUCS would be moderate, in terms of additional resource and would essentially be similar to the addition of another Basketball Division. We would require the provision of trophies and medals and administration of the league in terms of entries, competition management (fixtures etc) and communication, along with marketing the league through the existing BUCS' networks. Therefore, additional BUCS staff resource will be required to facilitate this. Inclusion into BUCS Big Wednesday would also have moderate impact, utilising same court as Basketball with the only additional resource potentially coming in the appointment of different officials.

### **Institutions**

**Facilities** – Access to a full-sized Basketball court will be required for games and training. Games will take place at a weekend rather than on a traditional Wednesday based on feedback and availability of Workforce. BWB will schedule dates for games to be played on in order to ensure officials availability with other BWB Competition clashes.

**Costings** – Whilst every effort is made to minimise costs to the participant, the scale of the sport requires a contribution to ensure delivery of all levels of the pathway are sustainable and equal opportunities for all. Fees generated are to offset costs for appointing referees centrally for the BUCS Leagues as well as delivering the BWB 3x3 University Championships.

### **BUCS League requirements:**

- BWB Organisation Affiliation - £100 per institution
- BWB Individual Registration - £30 per person
- BUCS Team Fee – To be determined by BUCS
- Home Rounds – Universities will be responsible for costs of court hire and officials' fees.
- Away rounds – Universities will be responsible for travel costs

### **BWB University Championships:**

BWB Team Entry Fee - £50 per team

## **6. WIDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The impact of inclusion into the BUCS programme would be wide reaching for the sport throughout Britain. The impact includes:

1. Participation growth of disabled and non-sporty types.
2. Access to inclusive sport and equipment at universities.
3. Strengthened links with community clubs.
4. Workforce development and volunteering opportunities.
5. Promoting a positive image of disability and inclusive sport.
6. Increasing profile of the universities that participate.
7. Challenging stereotypes and perceptions of sport.
8. Performance pathway development.
9. Increased access to support services for disabled athletes, eg Strength and Conditioning, Physio etc
10. Improved access to scholarships or support services for disabled athletes.
11. Development of professional team franchises linked to Universities.
12. Increase in workforce opportunities for Coaches and Officials.

BWB has a Participation Team available to support university clubs with the development of workforce and club development. Officers will be on hand to support with funding applications and access to equipment through community club links.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

BWB are extremely excited for the opportunity to become the first disability team sport within the BUCS.

BWB already has a well-established University Programme with dedicated clubs and athletes within the competition programme. However, BWB does not have the resource and reach to effectively engage with the wider BUCS network and would benefit considerably from being included in the BUCS programme in order to raise awareness and break down perceptions.

With the support of BUCS, BWB feels there is potential for the number of institutions taking part in wheelchair basketball activity to significantly increase, providing institutions with the ability to engage hard to reach participants through a truly inclusive sport. Not only does the sport appeal to disabled people, but it also is proven to engage typical 'non sporty' types, with the majority of participants not taking part in any other university-based activity, disabled or not.

It is an exciting transformational time for wheelchair basketball in Great Britain; enabling delivery of the sport through a world-leading university programme (BUCS) will not only reflect the demands of an informed and inclusive student population, but will continue to profoundly demonstrate BUCS and BWB's commitment that the opportunity to participation in sport should be accessible to all.

## **8. British Wheelchair Basketball Contacts**

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