



Indian Blind Football Federation

Reg no 416/2016

Registered office : F-2, 5th Floor, South Square Building, Panampilly Nagar, Kochi - 682036, Kerala

Admin office : KMNP Law Office, A1/62, LFG, Safardung Enclave, New Delhi - 110029

Tel : +91-9447132363 / +91-9349985555 www.BlindFootball.in

BLIND FOOTBALL – GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Blind Football is a rapidly growing para-sport that promotes inclusion, physical fitness, confidence building, and competitive excellence among persons with visual impairment. The Indian Blind Football Federation (IBFF) has been systematically developing the sport across grassroots, state, zonal, and national levels, with a long-term vision of mass participation and sustained international performance.

This document presents IBFF's structured Grassroots Development Plan, outlining the history, current status, challenges, activities, outcomes, and long-term impact of blind football development in India.

2. HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Blind Football in India began in 2013, initiated by the *Society for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Challenged (SRVC)*, Kochi, Kerala. During the formative years, the sport faced significant challenges:

- Limited awareness of blind football rules and formats
- Non-availability of essential equipment such as blind footballs, eye masks, and sideboards within India
- High costs associated with importing specialised equipment

Despite these constraints, IBFF and SRVC continued grassroots efforts with strong commitment and innovation. Low-cost solutions were developed, including:

- Local production of eye masks
- Rotational training using limited footballs
- Makeshift sideboards using benches, desks, and locally available materials

Special emphasis was placed on the North-Eastern states, where football culture is strong. In several regions, visually impaired players were found playing football using plastic bottles filled with stones, highlighting both resource scarcity and extraordinary passion for the sport.

Progress Achieved Over 12 Years

- Active blind football programmes in 24 states
- More than 800 registered men and women players
- Regular zonal, national, and international competitions
- Establishment of a National Blind Football Academy
- Development of three portable sideboard sets used nationally
- Five states now own sideboards, enabling independent hosting of events



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3. CURRENT STATUS OF GRASSROOTS INFRASTRUCTURE

3.1 Grounds and Training Facilities

- Blind football tournaments are primarily conducted on artificial turf grounds due to safety requirements.
- However, artificial turf rental costs are high; therefore, some tournaments are conducted on natural grass grounds.
- No state association currently owns a dedicated blind football ground.
- Gujarat is presently developing the first exclusive blind football ground by an IBFF affiliate.
- Except for Gujarat, all associations depend on rented grounds for training and competitions.

IBFF Model – Kochi:

- IBFF has partnered with a ground owner in Kochi for the Blind Football Academy.
- Permanent sideboards are installed.
- Ground owners provide concessional rental, while using sideboards for advertising revenue.

Current Ground Access Summary:

- 1 association developing its own ground (Gujarat)
- 2–3 associations have regular access to artificial turf
- Majority of associations lack a dedicated training ground

Need Identified:

IBFF plans to work with each affiliate to secure partner grounds for regular training and tournaments, supported by permanent sideboards and reduced rental models.

3.2 Coaches

- Each state currently has 1–2 coaches accompanying teams to IBFF events.
- Most coaches lack formal professional training in blind football.
- Approximately 50 coaches are currently involved nationwide.

Challenges:

- Limited access to structured coaching education
- Lack of zonal-level refresher and follow-up programmes

Proposed Action:

- Regular zonal-level coaching certification programmes
- Continuous capacity building and mentoring of new coaches



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3.3 Players

- Over the last three years:
 - 400+ men players
 - 200+ women players
- New players are identified in every IBFF event.

Key Challenge:

- Many states have NGOs working with visually impaired persons but are not yet introduced to blind football.

Strategy:

- Expand outreach to all states and institutions
- Introduce blind football as a regular sporting option for visually impaired youth

3.4 Structure of Affiliate Units

- IBFF has affiliated units in 23 states:
 - 12 registered state associations
 - Remaining units are NGOs or institutions

Challenges:

- Most affiliates function on a voluntary basis
- Limited organisational capacity and full-time manpower

Requirement for Sustainability:

- Each affiliate should have:
 - At least one paid coordinator
 - Basic equipment kits
 - Access to a partner turf ground with permanent sideboards

This structure is essential for : sustained grassroots activity at the state level.

4. GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

4.1 Training and Awareness Programmes

IBFF conducts regular training and awareness programmes to:

- Introduce blind football in new states
- Identify players, coaches, referees, and officials
- Onboard schools and NGOs for the visually challenged

Recent Impact:

- Training camps in Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh led to the formation of official state teams in both states.



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Planned Expansion:

- Puducherry
- Jammu & Kashmir
- Rajasthan
- Other unrepresented regions

4.2 Zonal Championships

Zonal Championships form the backbone of IBFF's grassroots structure.

Key Features:

- One team per state within the zone
- Open participation with no entry restrictions
- Reduced travel costs

Achievements:

- 13 Men's Zonal Championships
- 8 Women's Zonal Championships
- 50 players participating annually

Capacity Building:

- Referee clinics at every zonal event
- Coaches' orientation programmes

Player Motivation:

- Introduction of Emerging Player Awards at zonal level

4.3 Junior Level Blind Football Championships (Planned)

IBFF plans to introduce Junior Level Championships to:

- Identify talent at an early age
- Establish a long-term athlete development pathway
- Strengthen future national teams

4.4 National Blind Football Academy

The National Blind Football Academy provides structured long-term training:

- Selection through zonal and grassroots programmes
- Regular technical, tactical, and physical training
- Holistic athlete development

4.5 Blind Football Premier League (BFPL)

The Blind Football Premier League is an advanced development platform.



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Key Features:

- Elite competition with professional structure
- Mandatory inclusion of minimum two domestic-level players per team
- Opportunity for emerging players to play alongside national team athletes

Grassroots Impact:

- Faster player development
- Increased exposure and motivation

4.6 Development of Coaches and Referees

Coaches Development:

- Training programmes with international experts
- Coaches invited from Germany, England, and Malaysia
- Focus on safety and international standards

Referees Development:

- National and zonal referee certification programmes
- Training conducted by international referee coordinators

4.7 National Blind Football Championship

- Top teams from zonal championships qualify
- Final platform for national team selection
- Ensures merit-based progression

5. OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- Nationwide expansion to 24 states
- Strong talent pipeline from grassroots to national teams
- Improved technical standards of coaches and referees
- Increased international competitiveness
- Enhanced social inclusion and empowerment of persons with visual impairment

6. CHALLENGES

- Lack of dedicated infrastructure
- Limited financial resources
- Absence of full-time manpower at state level
- High cost of artificial turf rentals

7. CONCLUSION

The IBFF Grassroots Development Plan represents a sustainable, inclusive, and scalable model for para-sports development in India. With continued support from SAI, PCI, and IBSA, IBFF aims to:



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- Expand blind football to all states and UTs
- Strengthen junior and youth pathways
- Professionalise grassroots structures
- Achieve sustained international excellence

This plan aligns with national priorities of inclusion, talent development, and sporting excellence.