

If your child loves a sport, or wants to stay with peers in that sport, work with the coach to help them understand the child's vision so that they can best support them. Some have successfully played team sports like soccer, netball or basketball, at junior and senior levels with the support of other players calling the play or positions, letting them know when to expect a pass.

They can try some of the individual sports like self defence, gymnastics, dance, trampolining, horse riding or cross country running with minimal support from friends. Mainstream sports like golf, ten pin bowling, skiing or snowboarding, athletics and swimming allow them to compete with sighted peers, but also offer low vision categories where they can compete at higher levels as equals.

### Low Vision Sports

Participation in blind/low vision or paralympic sport provides even more opportunity for children and teenagers, as both social and competitive players. They also offer the added opportunity to meet other teens with low vision and achieve at a state, national or international level, with many clubs welcoming their sighted friends to also participate. Sports designed for blind or low vision players include Goalball (team game), tandem cycling and Swish (based on table tennis). Mainstream sports with modified rules and equipment include triathlon, cricket, tennis, gymnastics, soccer, Australian rules football; while golf, tenpin bowling, lawn bowls, indoor bias bowls, judo and karate, wrestling, powerlifting, sailing, waterskiing, rowing, snow sports, equestrian, athletics and swimming events provide competitions for those with low vision (allowing a guide where relevant).

Goalball is an exciting team game involving skills, fitness and an opportunity for social connections with others who understand low vision. At local and state level, sighted friends are also encouraged to participate and compete (wearing a blind fold), making it easier for children and teens to connect to a new group with the support of friends.

The **Blind Sports Australia** website listed on the AFA page has excellent information on sports available for those with low vision and links to Blind Sports in each state for local information and "come and try" days for children and adults.

### Paralympic sports participation in Australia

Sports with events in the visually impaired category for **Tokyo 2020/21** include:

**Summer:** Athletics, Cycling, Equestrian, Goalball, Paratriathlon, Rowing and Swimming. Also Football (5-a-side) and Judo, but there are limited programs for these. (Sailing was dropped for the Tokyo Olympics)

**Winter:** Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing (and Biathlon with limited programs).

Those with a visual acuity measurement in both eyes of 6/60 or higher may qualify for this. In order to officially compete in local, regional, state or national level Paralympic events, the athlete must undergo a National Classification with an approved classifier. For those in regional areas who cannot access this, a Provisional Classification is possible with reports from your ophthalmologist submitted to the classifier, but will not qualify you to National level competition. Athletes may be classified from 8 years of age.