

Youth Ruleset Adaptations - Foam 2026

Introduction

The official ruleset is available on the [WDBF Rules page](#). The following rule adaptations are for implementation at youth dodgeball events at official competition level (for example, national and international competitions).

Adaptation Principles

Rule amendments have been designed to support safety in addition to physical and tactical development. They have been rigorously tested at youth events around the world between 2021 and 2026.

Types of Adaptation

The WDBF recognises that each dodgeball event played around the world is different - different intended outcomes, catering to different audiences with different experience levels and abilities. We therefore present three types of adaptations in the following format over two columns:

WDBF	Youth	Competition	Optional	Youth	Competition
Adaptations:			Adaptations:		
These are the adaptations that will be used at official WDBF international events.			These are optional adaptations that National Federations and other organising bodies may make to better cater for their audience or meet their intended outcomes.		
			Grassroots Adaptations: <i>Further optional adaptations may be made for recreational or grassroots audiences (both youth and adult). These are in italics and outlined in the Grassroots Ruleset Adaptations 2026.</i>		

A matrix of recommended adaptations for varying audiences is presented in [Appendix A](#).

WDBF Age Categories

WDBF Youth Competitions:

- Official WDBF Age Categories are:
 - **U11** - Players who are 11 years old or under on the end date of an event.
 - **U13** - Players who are 13 years old or under on the end date of an event.
 - **U15** - Players who are 15 years old or under on the end date of an event.
 - **U18** - Players who are 18 years old or under on the end date of an event.
 - **Adult** - Players who are 19 years old or over on the end date of an event.
- **Minimum Ages:** Players may not compete in age categories which are 2 age categories above their own. For example, a U11 player may compete in u13 and u15 categories, but not u18.

Optional Youth Competition Adjustments:

- National Federations may adjust these age categories for their own events to align to their own objectives. This may include:
 - Using the date of a new year, new academic year or season as the cutoff point for age categorisation.
 - Making small adjustments to age categories (for example, using u12 instead of u11) to ensure competitions can go ahead.

Rule Adaptations Summary

Rules in blue have been adapted in the following section for youth gameplay. Unless specifically mentioned, official foam rules apply to all age categories.

Part 1: Definitions and Interpretation

Standards

Definitions

Interpretation Standards

Part 2: Facilities and Equipment

1. Facilities

2. Equipment

Part 3: Participants and Roles

3. Players

4. Ball Retrievers

5. Team Leaders

6. Officials

Part 4: Match Format and Timing

7. Timing

8. Scoring

Part 5: Set Start Procedures

9. Starting the Match

10. Ball Placement

11. Opening Rush

12. False Starts

13. Ball Activation

Part 6: Live Play Rules

14. Throwing

15. Burden

16. Live Ball and Dead Ball status

17. Hits

18. Traps

19. Blocking.

20. Out Players

21. Exiting Players

22. Catching

23. Re-entry on a catch

24. Entering Players

25. Boundaries and Out of Bounds

Part 7: Special Resolutions

26. Wash resolution

27. Simultaneous Play

28. No-Blocking transition

29. Tie-Breaking Set

Part 8: Violations and Penalties

30. Code of Conduct

31. General Penalty Principles

32. Card Accumulation and Match

Forfeiture

33. Ball Retriever Penalties

34. Yellow Cards

35. Red Cards

Part 9: Challenges

36. Challenges

Part 10: Injuries

37. Injuries

Part 11: Diagrams

Diagram 1: Foam Dodgeball Court

Part 12: Officiating Guidelines

1. Standard Calls and Signals

Specific Youth Ruleset Adaptations

Key:

- **U11/U13/U15/U18 Adaptation**
- **All Youth Categories Adaptation**

1. Facilities

WDBF Youth Competition Adaptations:

U11/U13/U15 -

- Use a 16m x 9m court

Optional Youth Competition Adaptations:

All Youth Categories -

- Besides the standard court of 18m x 9m (or shorter 16m x 9m court), the following may be used to support gameplay in smaller venues:
 - 14m x 9m

Grassroots Adaptations:

N/A

2. Equipment

WDBF Youth Competition Adaptations:

U11/U13/U15 -

- 4 x Size 1 (6" foam) dodgeballs are used. Two balls are placed within 3m of the side lines for the rush. Burden rules apply with the majority being 3 balls instead of 4 balls.

Optional Youth Competition Adaptations:

N/A

Grassroots Adaptations:

All Youth Categories -

- Event organisers may choose to implement the **Grassroots balls rule** to support inclusion of new players and those with additional needs:
 - Players may use balls a size down from their usual size.

5. Team Leaders

WDBF Youth Competition Adaptations:

All Youth Categories -

- A team must have a minimum of one adult team leader present at all times. If this team leader leaves courtside (for example, due to sanctions) and another adult cannot take their place, the team will forfeit the match.
- Two adult team leaders are recommended to cover situations such as a youth player requiring urgent medical attention.

Optional Youth Competition Adaptations:

N/A

Grassroots Adaptations:

N/A

7. Timing

WDBF Youth Competition Adaptations:

U11 -

- Sets last for a maximum of 2 minutes before transitioning to No-Blocking.
- A match is made up of two halves of 3 sets.

U13 -

- Sets last for a maximum of 2 minutes before transitioning to No-Blocking.
- A match is made up of two halves of 10 minutes.

U15 -

- Sets last for a maximum of 2 minutes before transitioning to No-Blocking.
- A match is made up of two halves of 12 minutes.

U18 -

- Sets last for a maximum of 3 minutes before transitioning to No-Blocking.
- A match is made up of two halves of 15 minutes.

Optional Youth Competition Adaptations:

All Youth Categories -

- Timing may be adjusted to suit an event's timeline or player's fitness levels.

Grassroots Adaptations:

U13/U15/U18 -

- Event organisers may choose to implement the **Grassroots timing rule** for their youth events to support simplified timings:
 - Matches may consist of a determined number of sets (for example, two halves of 6 sets) rather than a running clock.

20. Out Players

WDBF Youth Competition Adaptations:

U11 -

- *Players are not eliminated if they are hit in the face by a ball, unless they are ducking down and in movement when struck.*

Optional Youth Competition Adaptations:

U13/U15 -

- *Players are not eliminated if they are hit in the face by a ball, unless they are ducking down and in movement when struck.*

Grassroots Adaptations:

All Youth Categories -

- Event organisers may choose to implement the **Grassroots outs rule** to keep players on court:
 - *Players are not out when eliminated from the game, instead giving one point to the opposing team. The team with the most points at the end of the set wins.*
- Event organisers may choose to implement the **Grassroots faceshot rule** to disincentivise faceshots:
 - *Players are not eliminated if they are hit in the face by a ball, unless they are ducking down and in movement when struck.*

28. No Blocking

WDBF Youth Competition Adaptations:

U11/U13/U15 -

- Each No-Blocking period lasts for a maximum of one minute before progressing to Next Elimination Wins. If teams have the same number of players remaining after 2 minutes of Next Elimination Wins, the set is deemed a draw and both teams earn one point.

Optional Youth Competition Adaptations:

U18 -

- Each No-Blocking period lasts for a maximum of one minute before progressing to Next Elimination wins. The set is deemed a draw after 3 minutes of No-Blocking, with both teams earning one point.

Grassroots Adaptations:

All Youth Categories -

- Event organisers may choose to implement the **Grassroots no blocking rule** to keep activity levels high for all players:
 - Each No-Blocking period lasts for a maximum of one minute. If both teams have the same number of players remaining at the end of this period, the set is deemed a draw with both teams earning one point.

34. Yellow Card

WDBF Youth Competition Adaptations:

U11 -

- A yellow card lasts for the remainder of the current set plus the next two sets.

Optional Youth Competition Adaptations:

N/A

Grassroots Adaptations:

N/A

Appendix A

Suggested Adaptations for Various Events

	WDBF Youth Competition	National Youth League	School Competition	Beginner Festival	Inclusion Event
Facilities	U11/U13/U15 - Use 16m x 9m court	Use age-specific court sizes (18m x 9m / 16m x 9m) or small court (14m x 9m) to fit smaller venues	Use 16m x 9m court or small court (14m x 9m) to fit school venues	Use 16m x 9m court or small court (14m x 9m) to fit school venues	Use small 14m x 9m court
Equipment	U11 - 4x Size 1 foam dodgeballs	U11 - 4x Size 1 foam dodgeballs	U11 - 4x Size 1 foam dodgeballs	U11 - 4x Size 1 foam dodgeballs	U11/U13/U15 - 4x Size 1 foam dodgeballs
Team Leaders	Each team must have an adult team leader	Each team must have an adult team leader	Each team must have an adult team leader	Each team must have an adult team leader	Each team must have an adult team leader
Timing	U11 - 6 x 2m sets U13 - 10m halves, 2m sets U15 - 12m halves 2m sets U18 - 15m halves, 3m sets	Use WDBF competition timings, but may be shortened to fit event timings	U11 - 6 x 2m sets U13 - 6 x 2m sets U15 - 8 x 2m sets U18 - 8 x 3m sets May be shortened to fit event timings	U11 - 6 x 2m sets U13 - 6 x 2m sets U15 - 8 x 2m sets U18 - 8 x 3m sets May be shortened to fit event timings	All ages - 6 x 2m sets May be shortened or lengthened to fit event timings
Outs	U11 - players are not out if hit in the face.	U11 - players are not out if hit in the face.	All ages - players are not out if hit in the face.	All ages could use points instead of eliminations. Players are not out if hit in the face.	All ages could use points instead of eliminations. Players are not out if hit in the face.
No Blocking	U11/U13/U15 - No-blocking lasts for one minute before the set ends. If drawing, play 2m of Next Elimination Wins.	U11/U13/U15 - No-blocking lasts for one minute before the set ends. If drawing, play 2m of Next Elimination Wins.	All ages - No-blocking lasts for one minute before the set ends. If drawing, both teams earn 1 point.	All ages - No-blocking lasts for one minute before the set ends. If drawing, both teams earn 1 point.	All ages - No-blocking lasts for one minute before the set ends. If drawing, both teams earn 1 point.
Yellow Card	U11 - yellow card lasts for current set + next 2 sets	U11 - yellow card lasts for current set + next 2 sets	U11 - yellow card lasts for current set + next 2 sets	U11 - yellow card lasts for current set + next 2 sets	U11 - yellow card lasts for current set + next 2 sets

This table shows suggested ruleset adaptations to be used in a range of event environments. The adaptations used are ultimately at the discretion of the event organiser and should be announced clearly in event regulations literature.