

PALACKY UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF PHYSICAL CULTURE

Football for the Blind

2008

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## **Abstract/Keywords**

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**Title of Master thesis:** Football for the Blind

**Department:** Aplikovaných Pohybových Aktivit

**Year of presentation:** 2008

Football for the blind is a sport recently added to the official program of summer paralympic games, and that has the challenge to improve the quantity of players, coaches and associations involved with the sport. At the moment, in a international perspective, there is a strong need for information about the game, and how to organize a training session. This research shows a created group of cards, with guidelines and activities of football for the blind. These activities were used to plan two workshops, one held in Tübingen, Germany and another in Olomouc, Czech Republic. The outcome of the activities was evaluated using video-analysis and a questionnaire submitted by the participants. The result of the the evaluation showed that the guidelines are very relevant, the activities made with the support of the cards were very successful, enabling the players to increase their football skills. The guidelines are very useful to support a training program, but are not close, every reader should read it and adapt for his/her reality.

**Keywords:** Football, Blind, Training

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## **Abstraktní / Klíčová slova**

Fotbal osob se zrakovým postižením byl přidán do oficiálního programu olympijských her relativně nedávno, což mělo za následek zvýšení počtu hráčů, trenérů a asociací věnujících se tomuto sportu. V tomto mezinárodním kontextu to s sebou přineslo potřebu větší informovanosti o hře, a také poptávku po návodech, jakým způsobem vést a organizovat tréninky. Tento výzkum přináší ucelenou příručku, která byla vytvořena, aby plnila roli průvodce světem fotbalu osob se zrakovým postižením. Aktivita na jejím základě byly použity k realizaci dvou seminářů – jeden proběhl v Tübingenu, v Německu a druhý v Olomouci, v České republice. Výstupem poté bylo hodnocení prostřednictvím videozáznamu a dotazníků, které vyplňovali účastníci seminářů. Hodnocení dokázalo, že návod je velmi přínosný, aktivity prováděné na jeho základě se ukázaly jako užitečné a umožnily hráčům rozvíjet jejich fotbalové dovednosti. Příručka je tak určená pro vedení tréninkových programů, ale rozhodně není striktně uzavřená, což znamená, že kdokoli, kdo s ní bude pracovat, si ji může uzpůsobovat podle podmínek, ve kterých pracuje.

**Klíčová slova:** fotbal, zrakové postižení, trénink

## Acknowledgments

*To my family, friends, and to everyone who was with me, more or less time, but being  
together, shaping the man who I am now.  
And to Botafogo and Urece, the teams that made me passionate for sports.*

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## Introduction

Football for the blind is a very dynamic and entertaining sport, the opposite that laity people may think, the common sense attaches the disability to therapeutic activities, with non-competitive activities and that these activities are not entertaining.

When a layman sees a game for the first time, different reactions are taken; some people reacts with surprise, many are literally praying for the players, understanding the activities either as punishment or blessing of god, and for many people it is something curious, but a phrase said about the game that resumes the feeling of people who are seeing it for the first time is “*Wow! They can even dribble!*”.

A person that watches a game like this, and sees the ability of the players, in a next moment, when meeting a person with disability, is not going to see this person as a less-able; this person will be recognized as an able person, not with pity.

In other hand, the person with blindness who plays football, and clearly push his personal boundaries forward, finds himself much stronger and able to face daily difficulties and challenges.

Sports, practiced in a healthy way, with appropriate techniques and methodology are beneficial for any person, able bodied or not, but for persons with blindness, who often aren't aware about the possibilities to practice a sport, and who generally had less motor stimuli during the childhood, when they start, the benefits have the tendency to be even greater(Miranda, 2008).

Football, has over this, the benefit to be a group sport; in this environment, the athlete spends more time with pairs who have the same kind of disability as they, what is beneficial for, first the acceptance of the situation, and in a later moment, personal development.

For professionals, football for the blind has also a great impact, it is very demanding to plan activities, but it is also very rewarding to see the



development of the players as athletes and human beings, it is very nice to see that opinions of the society regarding the blindness can change.

For me, as a person interested in the sport, in its history, development and reality, I can say that the best feeling to me, working with this sport is the possibility to change a reality through the sport, and that this change is generally positive.

I got involved with the sport as a goalkeeper, invited by two friends, and to me, it was an invite first to join my friends in a training of football. They are blinds, and their team was needing one substitute goalkeeper to complete the team.

After the start as a goalkeeper, and developing my way on Physical Education University, the game of football with my friends started to be a possibility of work, because there was an interesting work field, and with many possibilities, because few professionals were working in this area.

I worked at Benjamin Constant Institute from 2001 to 2005, and after this I went to England, to work with the national team of that country, where I stayed for one year, with the opportunity to travel around Europe and get to know me about the reality of the sport in different countries and realities.

After this year, back to Brazil, I worked in the creation of Urece Sports and Culture for the Blind, an non-profit association that works to promote physical and cultural activities for the blind in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

During the experience at Urece, it was clear to me, in many conversations with professionals, athletes and directors of other associations that everyone wanted to do blind football, but there were a big difficulty to find information about the ways to do the trainings, the focus of activities and strategies.

Coming back to Europe, to do the Erasmus Mundus Master in Adapted Physical Activities course, the natural way of my research was to increase the base of available resources about the sport, and more specifically, the training part, what I think that is the fundamental stage of the sport.

This study is not a complete guide of the sport, it is a part of the necessary information for an adequate activity program; it will focus first in give to the reader a better understanding about the history and the roots of the sport, that is closely related to the culture of the football in Latin countries, but not necessarily close to the reality in other countries and cultures.

The activities proposed in this research are not a closed program with an pre-defined set-up, the information is made in a open format that will enable every coach to adapt it with activities that are closer to his experience and his environment culture.

## Football History

Football (soccer) is the world's most popular sport. The game has unrivaled worldwide appeal (Palacios-Huerta, 2004), it is arguably the only truly global game and its influence cuts across economic, political, social and cultural spheres (Arnaut, 2006), and surely, its appeal affects groups of individuals with disability. In this research, this relation of football and blindness will be investigated, looking to the evolution of the football in the world, and the track that made possible to blind persons to play football.

The first records of activities similar to the Football shows that it wasn't created as a leisure game as we know today, these records of the rudimentary stages of it dates on the 3rd Century Before Christ, in China (FIFA.com, 2008), as military exercise of the army of the emperor Xeng-Ti (Normando, 2004), and was called Tsu'Chu (Cuju) - what means literally "Kick Ball". It was a team exercise, with the objective of putting a leather ball into a small (30-40cm) opening, what nowadays is the goal. A detailed explanation of the game is available online (Cuju -.Wikipedia, 2008)

After that, FIFA records shows another game that had an important role in the development of the football; in Japan around 300 to 600 AD, a game called Kemari (Kemari – 蹴鞠, 2008) , where players were placed in a circle, keeping in a cooperative way, the ball in the air; it means that it was different from Cuju in the meaning that Kemari has no dispute for the ball possession (Kemari -Wikipedia, 2008), the main characteristic of the Cuju. A very similar game, keepie-uppies, is played in many countries, in Brazil it is very spread, and is played as a leisure game and warm up for football.

Finally, in 1863, in Cambridge University, in England a meeting was made to unify the football rules. It can be the moment where football was officially born as we know nowadays. The original idea of the 17 rules are still the same, and changes were made just to make the game more fluent and dynamic. Most of the changes were made concerning the offside rule. Some elements were added to the game, as the cards, to be shown by the referees, as

a universal sign for official warnings and the substitutions, allowing reserve players to join the matches, replacing a first team player.

Nowadays football is the most popular in the world, the coverage of last FIFA World Cup, in 2006

*“Was the most extensive to date with 376 channels showing the event compared to 232 in 2002. What is more, the 2006 event was aired in a total 43,600 broadcasts across 214 countries and territories in 2006, generating total coverage of 73,072 hours - an increase of 76 percent on the 2002 event (41,435 hours) and a 148 percent increase on 1998. This means that if all the 2006 coverage were shown on just one channel, it would take over eight years to broadcast non-stop.*

*The 2006 FIFA World Cup Germany had a total cumulative television audience of 26.29 billion (24.2 billion in-home and 2.1 billion out-of-home viewers). This is on a par with the 1998 event, which like 2006 was also staged in Europe, but a little below the 26.4 billion in-home viewers noted for the 2002 FIFA World Cup in Korea and Japan. Unsurprisingly, the most-watched match was the final Italy - France with a global cumulative audience of 715.1 million viewers.”(Marketing & TV – FIFA.com, 2008)*

The relevance of football becomes very impressive when we analyse the amounts generated by this sport; player transferances reached €68.9 million, when the French Zinedine Zidane moved from Juventus-ITA to Real Madrid-ESP. (Football Database, 2008 and Zidane, 2008)

## **Futebol de Salão history**

Meanwhile the 11-a-side football was going in the path of development, people wanted to play football in different environments, and to fit the sport into a new environment, because in the big cities was hard to find enough space to have 11-a-side football fields, and the most reliable sources dates the creation on the 1930's Futebol de Salão was created in Montevideo, Uruguai. Futebol de Salão literally means "Hall Football", and is played in courts, and teams of 5 players each.

A interesting fact is the way that the rules were adapted to know that rules from different sports were mixed to create this new one: "Football gave the essence of the game, Basketball the time system, handball the goal validity rules, and water-polo the goalkeeper actions" (Santana, 2002). This mix created a really dynamic sport, played in a small environment, with a heavier ball, that doesn't bounce.

Hall Football was spread in South America, and in Brazil that it really became a popular sport, but not worldwide known. It was becoming more popular in Latin countries, as Spain, Portugal and Italy, but never worldwide strong. It started to become a worldwide sport in the 80's, when the first FIFUSA (Federacion Internacional de Futbol Sala - International Hall Football Federation) World Cup was organized, but the first 4 places shows the regional factor of the sport: Brazil was the Champion, Paraguay runners up, Uruguay and Colombia in 3rd and 4th place, respectively.

In the next edition, 3 years later, Spain entered the group of first 4 places, and in the 3rd edition, in 1988, the first 4 places were shared equally between Europeans (Portugal and Spain) and South Americans (Brazil and Paraguay) (Páez, Garin, & Ballesteros).

At this point, with the growth of the sport in Europe, FIFA started to be concerned about the power that Hall Football could have, and in a political move, created the Futsal, basically the same game as Hall Football, with some small differences on the rules.

## Futsal History

Futsal was created by FIFA, who was concerned with the growth of Hall Futsal organized by FIFUSA and with the political losses that it could bring, of another world level football organization becoming strong, and decided to organize an new way of indoor football to be promoted by it's affiliated national football associations.

The differences between the Hall Football and the Futsal are pretty much a development, to make the game more dynamic, allowing the field players to touch the ball in goalkeeper's area and the goalkeeper to leave his area; the throw-ins were substituted by kick-ins; the time system has been changed and the standard of the colors of the cards were made, following the 11-a-side football.

The sport itself became more dynamic, but it wasn't really an issue on Hall Football; the main reason for these modifications was a move to FIFA stay as the main and only strong football association in the world; the political issue created some strange situations; although Football and Futsal are both organized by FIFA, in some countries, mainly the ones who had a important role on the development of the Hall Football, there are 2 associations affiliated to FIFA, like in Brazil - CBF (Confederação Brasileira de Futebol - Brazilian Football Confederation) organizes the Football, and CBFS (Confederação Brasileira de Futebol de Salao - Brazilian Hall Football Confederation) organizes the Futsal competitions.

Futsal now is becoming more known in non-Latin Europe, and in some countries, like England, it is advertised as the secret of the skills of Brazilian football players.

*"How do players such as Luis Figo, Ronaldo, Ronaldinho, Robinho and Roberto Carlos develop skills that set them apart from other players? What did they do as youngsters that provided them with the basis to becoming some of the world's best players? If you are interested in the answer then you need to learn more about a game called Futsal"*(The Football Association,

2005 p2)

Futsal has a heavier ball that don't bounce as the football ball - Dropped of a height of 2 meters, the futsal ball must bounce between 50 and 65 centimeters, while the outdoor football has to bounce in the range of 115 to 165 centimeters (Fédération Internationale de Football Association, 2006). It, with the small sized pitch makes the dynamics of the game different of the outdoor football, faster, and with the ball most of the time on the floor; more skills and techniques are needed, players have a much closer contact with the ball, if compared with the outdoor football; if the player let the ball run away from him, the opponents are very closer, given the small space. In order to overcome the issues of such small sized court, beautiful skills and dribbles have been developed, and it makes the sport very appealing to the crowds, because they can see beautiful plays, good skills in almost every game.

These characteristics, mainly the heavier ball and the smaller sized court were the big reasons to make this kind of football the one to be adapted for the blind.

## Blind Football

- Beginning

It is hard to precise when and where the first blind football activities happened, mainly because these initiatives generally didn't start from the professionals and teachers; usually in blind institutes, the blind students wanting to play football too, as the sighted people can play. These initiatives weren't structured, and made by professionals, so, we lack records of these activities; SOUZA from Brazil and LOPEZ, from Spain, tells us the history of their countries; and these stories are relevant in a world level, given that these two countries were fundamental to the development of the blind football in the world, and still nowadays are powers of the sport. Souza and Lopez themselves are very important persons in the universe of Football for the Blind, both of them worked in the internationalization of the rules. Lopez is nowadays the chairman of the sport, and Souza was world champion as Brazilian coach.

Carlos Campos López (2002), in the book "Sports for the blind" of the Spanish Blind Sports Federation says:

"It is impossible to determine quickly how the Hall Football became a cultural mass phenomenon, but we can approach it paying attention how it can create emotions, in the ones who are practicing the sport and the ones watching it. And the blinds sportsman wasn't unaware of this, converting the football in one of your most enchanting sports"

López (2003) estimates that the sport started to be practiced in the playgrounds of schools during the 20's or even earlier. In Brazil the early records of blind people practicing football is in the 1950's, when, in a letter to Getulio Vargas the president of Brazil at that moment, saying that "*even blind people are playing football nowadays.*" (Franzini, 2005) and the writer defines this fact as "a calamity". It shows also how the sport for the blind was seen at that time in Brazil, not being accepted by the highest level of the government, so naturally, it was reflected in the general culture, and public



policies of that time. Souza presumes that the first organized blind football activities in Brazil happened around 40 to 50 years ago.

Mario Sergio Fontes (2006), former coordinator of Blind Football in Brazil, in a instructional book made by Brazilian Paralympic Committee addressed to Physical Education teachers in Brazil underlines that in the beginning, the game was played with teams formed of only 2 or 3 players, and sometimes it was played even individually, one against one, with the most diverse adaptation schemes, as is going to be seen ahead in this study.

The first competition organized in Brazil between blind institutes was held in 1974, in a tournament Porto Alegre, with participation of teams from 3 states; but in 1980, when one tournament was organized by APAE (Associação de Pais e Amigos de Excepcionais - Exceptionals Parents and Friends Association), one of the biggest associations for the disabled in Brazil, the first real step for the massification of the sport for the blind was made, and in the following years, conversations about implementation of Brazilian Blind Sports Association started, it was finally created 1984. (Fontes, 2006)

The first international competition was held in 1988 in Cadiz, Spain, at this point, there wasn't a standardized rules for all the world, and this tournament was played with the rules used at the time in Spain. This tournament had participation of the National Teams of Brazil, Peru and Portugal, with 2 Spanish clubs. The rules were standardized only in 1994, following this, the blind futsal subcommittee was created under administration of IBSA - International Blind Sports Federation

These standardized rules, with blindfolds, kickboards and further adaptations, were fundamental to the development of the sport in a international level. In the next years, continental competitions started to be organized, in America, it was organized the Pan American Games in 1995, and I America Cup of Blind football in 1997. During the same period, European tournaments were organized, in a development towards the first world cup of football for the blind.

The first edition of the world cup for the blind happened in 1998, in

the city of Campinas, Brazil. It was a determining step for the development of the sport. and after this moment, it was clear that the sport had a bright future ahead, and The champion of the first world cup was Brazil. Two years later, in Jerez de la Frontera, Spain, in the second edition of the World Cup, Brazil retained the title, and ensured its position as greater team in the world at the moment.

In the third edition, in 2002, The III World cup, also held in Brazil, this time in Rio de Janeiro, was the point where the Brazilian hegemony was break. Argentina won the title and Spain was the second Place, Brazil achieved only the third place, playing at home. a result that impressed everybody, who expected the maintenance of the Brazilian hegemony.

In 2004 the definitive step for development of futsal was made. Blind futsal was into the official program of the Paralympic Games, in Athens, and this competition had six participant teams - Argentina, Brazil, France, Greece, Korea and Spain. In this tournament, the two best teams made the final, Argentina and Brazil, and it the final was the perfect picture of the development of blind football at that moment, the only two world champions, ended the game in a draw, that was maintained on the extra time. Brazil only became Paralympic champion on the penalty shoot-outs.

The title in the Paralympic Games, didn't represent that the Brazilian hegemony re-started; in the following year, in Argentina, Brazil lost the final for Argentina, who became two times world champion, sharing the hegemony in the sport. with Brazil. The only advantage that Brazil has in the international scenario is the Paralympic golden medal.

In European level, Spain has the hegemony, winning the last two European championships, but in this continent, the best asset for the future is the partnership between IBSA and UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) where the last made a grant of one million Swiss francs for the development of the sport in European Union, several workshops and clinics are being organized in the continent in order to massificate the sport, given that in many countries the sport is not yet practiced.

A similar partnership is planned to be signed with FIFA, with the

objective of organizing similar workshops in different continents, but so far, FIFA didn't have a positive answer, and these clinics are being organized only in European countries.

- Adaptations

In the beginning, the way that was found to play was to adapt materials that produce sound, not necessarily a football, there are records of games played with metallic bottle caps or cans, or bottles itself with small stones inside. The and the pace and rhythm of the game were compromised, so a new method has been found; put the ball inside of a plastic bag. With this resource, the activities became more likely the football for sighted people, increasing the pace and emotion in the game. (IBSA, 2005)

A lot of different ways to adapt the game has been made, in order to improve the sound system of the balls, lots of metallic bottle caps were attached to the ball with strings, the sound was the best so far, but the ball was dangerous, the bottle caps, outside of the ball, injured a lot of players, and mainly the goalkeepers, and an internal system was developed, rattles were placed inside of the ball. It was a great improvement in the aspect of safety, but was a setback concerning the sound system.

The next step was to not only have the rattles inside, but some acoustic devices on some panels of the ball, reverberating the sound of the rattles, and solving the issue of the sound in the balls with the internal rattle. This system was so well developed that nowadays the official ball for the game must have internal sound system. The Brazilian government produces official blind footballs and distributes it for free, to any national blind sports association or paralympic committee<sup>1</sup>. This initiative enabled the sport to develop one step further, because the balls are accessible to everyone in the world. The delivery of these balls sometimes is too slow, so in different countries official balls are being produced, it is fundamental to the sport, accessibility to the equipment.

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1 To request the balls, the national organization should contact the Brazilian Blind Sports Confederation, addressing an official request to the president of the confederation. The contacts are available at: <http://www.cbdc.org.br>

Another key adaptation was the introduction of the kickboards, whose has the minimum height of one meter and maximum of 1,20m, placed over all the length of the sidelines. These kickboards were introduced because the pace of the game was getting compromised, as the balls was often going out on the sidelines, for kick-ins (in Futsal, the throw-ins are substituted by kick-ins, with the ball placed over the sideline). In blind futsal, there are passing, but the passes don't have the same accuracy as in sighted football,

With the kickboards, the balls stays longer into the playing field, increasing the pace and the rhythm of the game. It is important to underline that different from some variables of indoor football played with kickboards, in the blind football, there is no kickboards in the end line, because it could be very dangerous to players trying to reach a ball close to the end-lines, and plays near the goal would become much slower, because the players would have to avoid shocks with the kickboards in the end line. With the kickboards, it is not a problem, because the direction of the game goes towards the goals. These kickboards should be made of wood, metal or fiberglass, but the kickboards should be made in a way that don't cause danger to the players.

Another important role of the side kickboards is to help the players with the orientation within the field of game; as it is going to be discussed ahead in this study. In the past, it was very difficult to the players to have the best orientation in the game. Now, the players can use the walls in both sides of the field to help in the orientation during the game.

The goalkeeper is fully sighted, and the only person sighted in the field. This is important for the orientation of the athletes, and also for the sportive aspect; a blind goalkeeper wouldn't save most of the shots to the goal, bringing the scores to very high numbers. But a sighted goalkeeper, under the same rules of the regular futsal would have too much advantage among the other players, so, to restrict the actions of the goalkeeper, the goalkeeper area is different of the regular Futsal, with the small size of 2m X 5m (IBSA, 2005). With this restriction, the goalkeeper role is limited to saving shots and replacing the ball into the game.

The goalkeeper, with this restricted action zone, must have techniques

completely different of the regular futsal. The shots come from a very short distance, so the goalkeeper must have positioning and reflexes skills very developed, but the most specific asset of the goalkeeper must be the ability to communicate with the defenders. During the game, the players have the orientation support of 3 sighted persons; the goalkeeper, the coach and the guide. These participants should communicate with the players giving all sort of instructions, tactical, technical, motivational, and also describing the situations that are happening into the game. As better these instructions are, better understanding of the game the blind players will have, and will be able to perform their full sportive abilities.

The other sighted participants, the coach and the guide are placed outside of the field; the coach into the substitutes bench, and the guide behind opponent's goal. with this positioning, there are 3 sources of voices communicating to the players, one in each end line (goalkeeper and guide) and one in the sideline (coach).with this triangulation, plus the boards, the field players are able to orientate themselves in the field.

But the sighted participants have a determined field of communication; the court is split in three imaginary thirds, with the imaginary lines parallel to the end-lines. The goalkeeper is restricted to orientate players who are positioned in the first third, the coach should communicate only with players who are in the middle third, and the guide with the players placed in the last part. With this system, it is avoided that the volume of instructions gets too high, preventing the players of listening the ball and other information.

The last adaptation that is going to be focused in this chapter is the specific rule of "voy". Voy is a Spanish word meaning "I go", and the players who don't have the possession of ball, must say every time that they move towards the ball. This process ensures that the player with the ball will know when somebody is coming in his direction; this player don't need to say voy, because his position is already clear with the sound of the ball. If a player don't say voy, the referee should give a foul against his team.

## **Solution of problem**

Czech Republic is a country with developed activities for the blind, both in winter and summer sports, both in grassroots and competitive levels, and with an outstanding development in general Adapted Physical Activities; few countries in the world have the bachelor degree in APA, as Czech Republic and specialized centres of research and formation as the Centrum APA of Palacky University in Olomouc.

Czech Republic has high skilled professionals to work not only with blind athletes but also with different groups of the society, who needs specialized work.

But even in this way, professionals from Czech Republic do not have the specific experience with football for the blind, making it hard to start the football for the blind.

The development of this sport has also an important barrier that most of the knowledge was kept only with a group of coaches and countries, without many publications, scientific researches and information about it.

When presented in the media, the football for the blind is shown as the sport, the final product, but for a professional without experience and knowledge to start the activities, it is very hard to know how to do the training on the weekly basis, what to focus and other questions regarding the training.

Few information is available about these techniques; the offer is increasing gradually, but it is still very hard to find structured guidelines to work with the sport.

This work has the positive asset not only to interact with the reality in Czech Republic, but also be also a key to empower activities anywhere in the world.

This work will present guidelines to start and maintain regular activities of football for the blind, giving support for many countries where, like Czech Republic are the interest to start the football for the blind.

The number of countries with this interest has the tendency to increase, because recently UEFA, an European association of football for sighted, donated a significant amount of money to develop the football for the blind around Europe, and The international Paralympic Committee has a similar project to be applied worldwide.

This Research will increase the base of resources for coaches interested in the sport, with a practical approach and relevant information to organize the activities, making it easier to start the activities.

## **Methodology**

### **Main Goal**

The main goal of this work is to:

1. Create and evaluate a method of coaching football for the blind.
2. Evaluate this method

The created method is going to consist of cards containing guidelines to coach the football for the blind.

These guidelines have the objective to give the support to help any any coach to organize sessions of blind football trainings, focusing in areas like the safety, techniques skills like controlling the ball, dribbling, dribbles, passing, shooting in movement or steady.

For the implementation of these goals, the following tasks are going to be faced:

1. Evaluate the activities in two workshops; one only for woman, held in Tübingen, Germany and another in Olomouc, Czech Republic, made only for beginners.
2. With the proposed guidelines being evaluated in two different set-ups, of absolutely beginners and athletes with some previous experience in the game, the results are going to show a more honest outcome about the cards and the activities.

The guidelines should be applicable in any environment, and by coaches and professionals without previous experience with the football for the blind.



## Partial Goals

The partial goal of this research is to apply the activities to the groups, who are going to have the benefits inherent to the practice of football for the blind.

1. To make the suggestion of the cards
2. To make two workshops
3. Ensure that the participants are going to benefit of the activities
4. To make the analysis of questionnaires and videos of the activities
5. Finish the cards

The research wouldn't fulfill the full possibilities if didn't have the responsibility to offer the best conditions for the participants in the workshops, and in this way, it is very important to focus the activities and the workshops not only in the cards, and in the guidelines; it is very important to focus also in the players.

With the focus also in the players, it is guaranteed that they will also take as much advantage of the activities as it can be. They should have benefits regarding physical aspects, like space orientation, mobility skills, coordination, fitness, cardiovascular level, among many others, but it is not only that; there are also the psychosocial benefits.

The participants should benefit also from psychological and social benefits, the self esteem may increase with the practice of football (Ribeiro, Silva, 2005) also relates an development in social acceptance, and cultural belonging increase related to the blind football activity.

Given these information, the work on the set up of this research has necessarily to take in consideration the group who is going to participate in the workshops.

### ■ Research design

This research has the objective to empower blind football activities around the world, and to do this, a list of proposed activities has been made,

according to experiences reported in videos, articles and studies, added to the personal experience of the author.

The way that was found to organize these information was to use cards with explanations about the techniques and strategies to do a blind football training and/or activities. These cards are going to be guide the activities in two different workshops of football for the blind - the first in Tübingen, Germany and the second in Olomouc, Czech Republic.

The cards have the goal to serve as base for activities in long term, so most of the proposed activities are open, and is possible to adapt these activities for the reality of several levels of development of the players.

### ■ Evaluation

To evaluate the effectiveness of the cards, two ways of analysis were used; the first is the subjective analysis of the researcher, measuring the general applicability of the cards, with the support of video feedback of the activities, to support the analysis. The analysis was qualitative; the focus of this evaluation was to find key points of the the activities, finding the relevant points to be discussed.

Given the lack of standards for evaluation of blind football skills and development, this analysis has to be based in the subjective analysis of the researcher, based in the personal experience.

The evaluation will rate and graduate the outcome results of the activities in comparison with other experiences coaching, and development of several players of blind football, in different levels, from grassroots to international level players.

This work is not going to propose an instrument to evaluate it, future studies may propose instruments to evaluate the development and the skills of blind football players.

The second way to analyze the activities was a questionnaire answered by the participants. The questionnaire was originally made in German language by Tübinger Interessengemeinschaft behindelter und chronisch kranker Studierender (TIBS), organizer of the first workshop where the cards

have been evaluated, in Germany. The questionnaire was translated to Czech language, and then applied to the participants of the workshop held in Olomouc. Questions related to the structural part of the workshop, regarding accommodation, transport, food and related subjects were suppressed from the analysis for this study, because it wouldn't be relevant for the evaluation of the cards and activities itself.

### ■ Procedure

With the clear necessity to empower blind football activities around the world, and the struggle of different groups to start the football, this research was made with the creation of activity cards with the basic steps to be taken to start this activity.

These cards were made based on previous works made in Spain, Brazil and England; countries who are qualified for the next paralympic games and have an important role in the development of the sport in the world. From Brazil, 3 articles have been used:

- SOUZA, R. (2002) who speaks about the initialization of the blind football, in a publication focused to Physical Education teachers who teaches blind students. this article has been published in the scientific journal of Benjamin Constant Institute, the biggest institute for the blind in Brazil, and the only one administrated by Brazilian Federal Government;
- FONTES, M. (2006) who has a chapter in a book about paralympic sports published by the Brazilian Government and focused to Physical Education teachers, with activities focused not only for blind students, but also awareness activities focused for students from general schools;
- RIBEIRO, SILVA, (2005). who investigates the importance of football for blind kids, not only in a sportive approach, but also in a psychosocial approach, and it shows a lot of the benefits that the practice of football can bring for the blind.

From Spain, chapters of two books published by Spanish Blind Sports Association were used, both chapters have been wrote by Mr Carlos Campos,

who is currently IBSA's technical director of the blind football(Campos, 2002 and Campos 2003), and was one of the pioneers of the sport in the world; and these publications are more focused in explain the football for the blind itself, rules and adaptations, the training and skills are not the main topic of his work. Another resource available from Spain is a video explaining not only football for the blind, but also the football for partially sighted persons. The video has the focus to explain what is the sport, the rules and adaptations, and in the end has a brief explanation of coaching techniques for blind football players

Finally, from England, a DVD called "football for the totally blind" made in the ground of Royal National College for the Blind, in Hereford, where coaching techniques of football for the blind in the way that football is coached in England are shown (Larkin, 2005). This is an important resource, because it is one of the few video resources focused in coaching the football for the blind, although it is not completely up to date, with the techniques used nowadays. Many of the techniques shown in this videos are dependent; it means that a sighted person participates of the activity supporting the blind athlete; nowadays, independent techniques are more used, the players doing the activities by themselves, and the coaches only supporting with auditory stimuli.

After the literature review of this data, a group of activities, set-ups and techniques has been chosen to make the cards. These activities were chosen by criteria of relevance, pedagogic progression, possibility to be replied in a secure way and global appliance. The activities are focused in the main areas of blind football techniques, the basic set-ups, where coaches can adapt for their own exercises.

The main areas have been divided as following:

- General strategies

The general strategies are the ones that the coaches are going to use in every exercise, and has to be reinforced during all the coaching process:

- Safety

These information are fundamental to keep the players safe and avoiding accidents during trainings and matches. Football is a sport that has contact by it's nature and it is impossible to guarantee that the players are not going to get injured.

The safety principles are fundamental and during every step of the training should be reinforced, these safety points are written in the rules; the body position, the silence during the activities, and the "voy" rule.

- Body Position

The rules of the game, in it's chapter 12, that talks about the fouls and misconducts during the game indicates that it is a foul, and not allowed during the game "*to play the ball, tackle or seek the ball with his head down*" (IBSA 2005, p.26). It means that the players should always keep the posture, with the head up, this is important, because if one player has the head down, in a collision, the forehead can be injured. This is a dangerous injury, because it may have a lot of bleeding.

- Silence

During the games, and all the activities during a training session, the silence is fundamental for the activities, it will ensure that the players are going to listen every sound stimuli made during the activity. An ambient makes the activity poorer, because the players are going to have more difficulty to discriminate the relevant sounds for the activity.

During matches, the public should stay in silence during every moment of the match, and goals should be celebrated only after referee's whistle, to ensure that the players are going to listen only the relevant sounds to the game: the ball, the other players, goalkeeper, the coach, the guide and the referee; if the public don't keep the silence during the activities, the game shall be stopped, until the silence is restored.

During an training session, only relevant sound stimuli should be allowed in the training environment; parallel conversations, mobile phones, another sports classes should be stopped, to ensure that the players are not

going to be distracted with unexpected sounds, and lose the concentration in the body position and further safety postures.

The noise is not only a problem because it may distract the players; sometimes the noise is so disturbing that the players simply can't listen the relevant sounds, and it may easily lead to accidents.

- Voy

Voy is a Spanish word that literally means "I go" and, according the rule, has *"to say clearly and audibly the word "voy" or "go", or any other similar word, when seeking the ball, tackling or searching for the ball"* (IBSA 2005 p.26). This word is important to ensure that the player who has the ball will know where are the other in the court.

There are many doubts about when to say "voy", and many beginner players are used to say it continually, "voy voy voy voy voy", and it is not the most appropriate way to say, because the sound said repeatedly will disturb the other players, making harder to discriminate the sound of the ball. It is better to say voy once, when the movement towards the ball is started; if in more or less 2 seconds, he can't approach the player or changes direction, he should say "voy" again. In this way, only relevant information are going to be emitted.

- Environment

It is not listed in the rules, but it is fundamental for training session; before the start of any activity, the coaches should make sure that there isn't any obstacles within the surroundings of the court - chairs, tables, bags -the surface of the court should be without any object. It is important also to have a safe distance between the goal and the wall behind it - at least 2 meters, but this distance can be increased for beginners.

- Communication

During exercises, games and general activities, communication is one of the most important points, it is relevant to underline that communication is not about saying, but also about being understood. So it can be split in 2 different kinds of communication:

- Coach-Athletes

It is important that every instruction made by the coach is not only well transmitted to the players, with a clear and direct language, but also understood by the players; the explanation of the exercises should always have an space for the feedback of the players, and in this way, the coach can ensure that the proposed activity has been understood. It is fundamental because during the activity the players are not going to have the visual feedback, to see how the other players are doing the exercise; it is many times an extremely individual skill.

In specific cases, of exercises with movements, this confirmation that everyone understood the exercise is even more important; because the exercises with movement are made, as we are going to see forward, with paths, always in one-way. If one player don't understand the activity and moves in the wrong way, an accident is likely to happen, and this player hit another.

- Athletes-Athletes/coaches

In this sport, the athletes have an important role in the communication, they must be proactive concerning the communication. It is fundamental that every single doubt that they have concerning the exercises, game and activities are going to be asked. During the activities, they should have an precise mental map of the environment; where he is, where the others are, and how he relates with the whole situation. If this player is not sure about the position of a partner, he can always call the name, and wait for the reply of this partner to know where is his localization.

During the games, if the player is not aware of his position, he can always call the goalkeeper, the coach or the guide to help them to orientate in the court. During the game, the communication with the other players is very important, not only saying voy, but also speaking to his partners

- Controlling the Ball

The basic position that the player should do to receive and control the

ball in blind foot ball is with legs apart, in a distance smaller than the diameter of the ball, the feet will have a position of 120 degrees, and in the exact moment that the ball comes to the player, the toes are going to be raised.

The position is different from the regular football, where the players control the ball with only one foot; for the blind, the sound stimuli is not precise as it is a visual stimuli for players of sighted football. In this position, the area of reception of the ball is as wider as possible; this angle between the feet is ideal, because when the ball touches the wider parts of the foot, it has the tendency to go towards the center of balance of the body, between the legs, under total control of the player.

For players who are in an advanced stage, the coach should instruct the player to lift the toes in the moment that the ball arrives to player's feet; this is important, because a faster ball that goes in the direction of the toes may easily bounce over the foot of the player; with the toes lifted, the ball is less likely to bounce over the toes.

The exercises for training this skill should focus in both listening and moving towards the ball; the movement training should focus first in side-steps -the lateral movement - to receive the ball and when chasing running towards the ball, run over the ball, turn the body facing the ball, and do the basic position.

- Dribbling

The dribbling in football for the blind is another technique that is different from the football for the sighted; while sighted people plays with the ball is pushed forward, and usually touched every 2-4 steps, with the dominant leg, in blind football the ball is kept between the legs, and in every step the ball is touched, both with the dominant and non-dominant foot.

To this technique, is important that both feet are almost parallel, so the ball travels from one foot to the other constantly. If the feet is in the same position as the one to control the ball, the ball would have the tendency to go forward and away from player's control.



As said before, the sound stimuli is not precise as the visual stimuli, and if the player loses the contact with the ball, it is hard to control the ball again and keep dribbling. The player who has the possess of the ball has the advantage over other players because he has not only the sound stimuli of the ball, but also the tactile stimuli, having the ball all the time touching the feet. If the player loses the contact with the ball, the advantage of the tactile stimuli is lost, and all the players are in the same situation, with only the sound of the ball as stimuli.

If the player loses the control of the ball, it is recommended to do the technique of controlling the ball again; running past the ball, turning the body toward the ball, and controlling the ball again. With this technique, players are likely to regain the control of the ball, to start again the dribbling.

- Passing

Passing skills in football for the blind are very similar to general football; the pass is made with the internal part of the foot, the difference is regarding the position of the ball, sighted people usually to make the pass let the ball go a bit forward, and then, with a longer step, the pass is made. For the blind, this technique is not appropriate, because this long moment without contact would make the technique very hard for the players. In football for the blind, the ball is kept close to the body, and the last step before the pass is just a bit longer than a regular dribbling step, and the ball is just a very short period without contact with the foot.

Another important point to the pass is the communication, to know where the pass is going to. To make a successful pass is important to the player know where he is and where the partner is, and to know it, the communication during the game is fundamental, not between the players but also the sighted person of the game, for example, the guide may say that the player 1 should pass the ball to the player 2, the player one should ask for the second player, and after some answer, the first player will know where is the partner.

In exercises, it is important to focus in the technique of the pass and the ability to pass the ball to the desired direction; for players who are in a

advanced stage, the exercises can be focused in lob passes, in the air, that are going to be harder for the opponents to know where is the ball, because it only makes sound when it is rolling in the floor.

- Shooting

The technique is different from sighted football, because in the last one, the player can see where is the goalkeeper, and where is the best place to aim the ball; for the blind, it is not possible; the player should rely on the instructions of the guide to shoot to the goal. The blind player, when shooting, kicks with the toe, stronger as possible, making harder to the goalkeeper to save the ball, even being able to see.

The training for shooting of the blind player should be first focused in the understanding of the position of the goal, related to the guide; the player should have the ability to shoot most of the balls into the goal, The next steps of the progression are first to develop the power of the shoots; the technique of the shots has to be improved, because faster shots are more difficult for the goalkeeper to save, after being able to shoot fast and into the goal, the last step of the development is the ability to not only shoot in the direction of the voice of the guide, but closer to the posts, in the side of the goal, making it even harder for the goalkeeper.

To shoot in movement has the technique similar to the pass, the last step is just a bit wider than a regular step, and the player keeps the contact with the ball as long as possible. The shot is made with the toes, it means that the foot will stay basically in the same position as the one during dribbling (the feet are almost parallel during the dribbling) and no rotation of the leg is necessary.

To take penalties and direct fouls, the technique is also different; the shots are made from steady position without any steps before the kick, when the player tries to do the steps before the shot, it usually makes harder to the player to hit the ball successfully. The most spread technique to take the penalties is to hold the top of the ball with the hand, bending the body ahead, and shooting from this position, releasing the Ball just before the kick. This support makes the success rate of the shots much greater.

## ■ Finding Participants

To find the participants, the support of organizations who works with specific groups were used; in Germany TIBS had an fundamental role, contacting women who have been involved or demonstrated interest before about blind football, to contact and find these participants, were used word-of-mouth strategies, email written to specific mailing groups who had potential participants and phone calling. basically it was taken an direct approach, and people who were already aware of sports for the blind were contacted.

In Czech Republic, the participants were found with the support of TyfloCentrum of Olomouc, were contacted by phone, electronic mail and advertisement on a website. TyfloCentrum is one of the biggest organizations that have the work focused for blinds and visually impaired in Czech Republic; the task to find participants in Czech Republic was more difficult than in Germany, because the community of blind people wasn't aware of the possibility to play football, and many of possible participants didn't dare to try the football.

## ■ Respondents

In Tübingen, 8 participants took part in the workshop - all female, age ranging from 13 to 46 years old, four with previous experiences in football for the blind, four having the first experience in this sport. From these, four replied the questionnaire.

The workshop held in Olomouc was attended by four participants, all adults, male, none of the participants had previous experiences with structured football for the blind; only some experiences with leisure games with sighted friends and relatives. From these participants, two answered the questionnaire.

## Results and interpretation

According to the subjective analysis of the activities, the expected results were achieved; the participants went into activities made according to the principles that cards stated, with very strict safety methods, and seeking the greater improvement in each of the techniques as possible. In the reality of a workshop, the biggest goal of the program was to provide the activities in a safe and enjoyable way, because if some accident happened, the motivation for following trainings would decrease considerably.

In Germany, in the workshop made for women, who mainly had average knowledge about the techniques of blind football and the game, the focus was more in increase these skills and understanding about the game; most of the players had understanding of the techniques, but difficulty to perform it, with small spotted mistakes. The focus of the instructions was to correct these spotted mistakes.

The participants of this workshop regularly does the training with men, and underestimate their abilities, because playing in mixed teams, they have a big handicap, concerning the body size. Playing in a homogeneous group, their real abilities could appear, what is very relevant.

As result of this strategy, the participants could show a relevant improvement in key areas of their development, and went back to their homes with the need to practice the skills in the new way proposed. It was a common correction to work and improve the laterality of the movements, in several situations, the movement with the non-preferred leg was poor, and the instructions during the workshop was to improve the awareness of this problem, so the participant would be able to correct it in following training sessions, back to their hometowns.

One of the participants had in a higher skills level, inclusive, playing in the first squad of her team, while some men are in the reserves and she had individual skills very well developed, only lacking experience of the game itself, and it is only possible playing more; she was in a higher level than the

group, so it was sometimes hard for her to get motivated with exercises that she already mastered.

In Olomouc the focus of the work was to explain the basic techniques of the sport; and the players had a very good outcome result; players could understand the differences between the techniques of sighted football, whose they tried to do before, and the techniques used in football for the blind. The result of the activities was very positive, the proposed activities were successful applied to the group and more important, leaded by the assistants without experience coaching blind athletes.

In the end of the workshop, the participants were able to combine more than one technique, move in the court freely, running with confidence. This is important because the football for the blind requires the confidence to move actively in the environment.

The skills were also very well internalized, the participants were able to do passes from a distance of 15 meters accurately, able to shoot towards the guide voice and to dribble successfully. The assistants, without experience and only with the guidelines present on the cards were able to explain the exercises to the participants.

The results of the questionnaires showed that the participants were very satisfied with the activities, in their feedback, all the participants returned positive opinions about the workshops. All the participants replied saying that they could feel an improvement in their football skills.

Regarding the understanding of the game, 83.33% of the respondents replied that it improved. The understanding of the game is very important for a good blind football player, because while the game happens, the participant only listen it, the understanding of the game is not clear as is for a sighted person. The only respondent who didn't feel an improvement regarding this point was one who was commented above, who had a higher level of skills.

Participants returned very good results regarding the purpose of the exercises, duration, motivation and stimulation; always with grades over 60%. An important factor was the grades to the communication between the players

and the coaches/assistants, the grades were always over 80%.

Regarding their expectation towards the workshop, the participants returned that they wanted to improve their experience in blind football, to know new training strategies, and in Czech Republic, there was the report that the expectation was to start the blind football in the country.

The participants were asked if their expectations were met or not, Three of the respondents had the expectations met, one replied that the expectations wasn't adequately met, and two replied that the workshop brought more than they expected.

When asked if they would change something in the workshop program, four of the participants said that they wouldn't change anything, one of the participants from Germany said that would change to have "one game". One of the participants replied saying that he would have more space for the activities.

The respondents didn't live in the cities of the workshop; they had to travel between 90 minutes and 5 hours to participate in the activities, both in Germany and in Czech Republic, the respondents had to travel to the cities of the workshops.

#### ■ Comments

The general gain was impressive; the fact that the players moved away from home to participate in this workshop, investing time and dedication to participate may bring an greater motivation for the activities and this fact may help explain the result that the participants had regarding the development on the skills; the improvement was much greater in the workshop than it would be in regular training basis.

It indicates that the use of the strategy of making workshops is valid; the motivation for the exercises was very intense; it was clear that the participants wanted to enjoy and make a good use of each moment of the activities, in a regular training scheme, the players have the tendency to be laid back, but in a workshop, with a different coach, it is likely that the participants are going to retain more information.

Regarding the activities and the proposed guidelines given in the

cards, the outcome was very positive, the players were generally very satisfied with the exercises that were made in the workshops. The safety feeling that the participants had was very important, because once they felt safe and trustful in the environment and activities, they could only enjoy the experience, without any fear that could paralyze them.

Both workshops followed the principles stated in the cards, and it was successful; it showed that was an interesting approach to propose an open activities scheme, because it can be adapted to different realities and level of physical abilities of the participants. These guidelines can be used from entirely beginners up to athletes in international level, the difference is the intensity of the exercises and the focus, but the basic set ups, the techniques are the same.

#### ■ Considerations (interpretations) about the results

During the process of this study, it was clear that the study didn't have an appropriate range of appliance; the sport has the goal to be spread around the world, and this study only encompassed two environments to evaluate the effectiveness of the guidelines proposed in the cards, both environments were located in Europe, and it makes hard to ensure that the techniques are applicable for every environment in the world. It is recommended that these cards become evaluated in other countries and continents.

It would be interesting if in the future a similar study come true, but with the support of IBSA, and with a longer and broader range of coverage. An study organized by IBSA could have the participation of international coaches, who could organize a longer study with guidelines and also specific exercises, if possible with a video version, to make even easier for beginner coaches to understand the activities.

## Discussion

This study followed most of the guidelines proposed by the articles used in literature review, and the results were successful, showing that the work developed in the countries who have a leading role in the competitive level of this sport in the world. These articles used in the bibliography review have the tendency to show some examples of activities, with specific goals and predetermined routines.

In this study, the focus of the cards was different, it was first to show a variety of basic set-ups used to do the exercises, and then, to show the objective that should be worked in each exercise, and the coach, with his experience, in his reality, will have the possibility to make the most suitable exercises for his group.

It is relevant to reinforce this fact, because this study may be used in different environments, and didn't had the possibility to be evaluated in so many environments; so would be impossible to make affirmations without the worldwide knowledge.

The other studies have mainly provincial focus, to disseminate the football for the blind in their countries, and in their specific reality and structure, so they were able to propose more objective exercises; while this study has a global focus, to be pasteurized and adapted in different realities around the world.

### ■ New findings

This study has a pioneer approach that could show a way to explain techniques to lead football for the blind trainings and activities that are not closed and limited; the proposed material is going to give the guidelines for the first sets of exercises, but the information is given in a open way, explaining the set-ups from which an infinite number of exercises can be created by the coaches.

The research has also the asset that the activities are not planned or



focused in a specific environment or reality in the world; it has a generic view of the sport, as didn't happen before, so it might be replicable in every place of the world, not relying in certain facilities that are available in one country or the other.

#### ■ Broader Implications

This work shows a new kind of training strategies, and the proposed activities are not closed; it has an open group of guidelines, that will enable the professionals to develop their own activities, systems and techniques. It is important because closed set-ups, with a restrict number of exercises were already available in the world, but many of the coaches who were beginning to work with the sport struggled to go further in the development of the activities. A Brazilian saying tells that "is better to teach a man fishing than to give the fish" and this work is in a path to teach fishing, supporting the coaches to improve and maintain the activities for long periods.

Another relevant impact that the study brought is to increase the base of available studies about the football for the blind. This sport was recently added to the official summer Paralympics program, but has still few articles, researches and studies about it. The football for the blind has clearly a greater number of professionals involved in the practical approach of the sport, coaching, developing skills and techniques than professionals using their experience and time to do researches about the sport.

There is a trend to increase the base of studies about the sport in the world, because there are many countries interested in start the sport and with questions about the sport, in every field of the sport; rules, competitions, techniques, tactics, and every other detail of the game. The sport before being paralympic, was developed by a small group of professionals, who exchanged informations mainly in competitions, and were few written reports and studies available.

Finally, this study had the positive impact specially in the reality of Czech Republic, because the workshop organized in Olomouc had a very good media coverage, a newspaper (Olomouc Denik, Annex 5) and a TV Show (Olomouc TV, Annex 4) had a coverage of the workshop, increasing the

awareness not only about this sport, but also about the possibility of the blind to practice sports and increased the knowledge about the work developed by Centrum APA.

#### ■ Comparison with another studies

Comparing with different researches made in the world, the results shows that the guidelines and activities proposed in this research are congruent to the results found in another studies that proposes blind football strategies of training.

The difference of this study compared with other studies available is regarding the way that the strategies of training were explained; instead of focus in a delimited group of activities, this research tried to show a group of guidelines that could allow the coaches to have the trainings for a longer period and in a more sustainable basis.

This work is not going in any way to invalidate the previous researches, the researches are complementary, the guidelines stated in this research wouldn't have any practical application without some examples of exercises and activities suitable for the football for the blind; that is the reason why there are two annexes stating the activities made in both workshops used to evaluate the cards, both in Tübingen and Olomouc. it will give a better understanding about the cards for the coaches who reads this study.

## Conclusion

The goals of this work have been achieved; an activity program was created, it was put into trials for evaluation in two different environments, distinct in nationality, skills level and gender, and it had an outstanding result in the evaluation process that was submitted; the video analysis of the activities and also the opinion of the participants.

The opinion of the participants is specially important at the moment does not exist an evaluation methodology for blind football, so their opinion is very relevant, as they are going to be the subjects of the activities, a participant will know better than anyone whether the methodology is appropriate or not.

The work is not conclusive; it has an open format, without definitive solutions for the activities – with the exception of the safety guidelines, that are fundamental – and it is very recommended that in the future, professionals reports their experiences with exercises set-ups, and discussing the applicability of these guidelines in their realities, so in the future a more complete work can be made, both with the general guidelines but also with exercises set-ups.

And finally, this study underlines that the football for the blind is an appropriate physical activity, and practiced with appropriate safety attitudes and methods, offers many benefits to the blind, physically, psychologically and socially.

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## **Annex 1 – Blind Football Workshop for Women, in Germany**

The workshop was split in 6 different sessions, with duration ranging from one hour to one and a half hours, four of these sessions done on Saturday April 5th, and two on Sunday, the 6th.

All the activities were done on Tübingen university sports hall, a big gymnasium, with wood surface and possibility to split the space in two different environments, with retractable divisor walls. this division was used only once, when the group that was more advanced were performing a small game for a camera crew that wanted to show game situations. other than this moment, the division was only used in the last session, in the game, to restrict the space of the game, with closer boundaries, giving more confidence to the participants to play the game.

### **The Activities:**

#### **First Session:**

1. Stretching - Long stretching, interleaved with warm up exercises, moving the joints, running into the same place and also stretching exercises made in pairs.
2. Sat, with legs wide open, foot touching the partner who is next in the circle, pass the ball to someone else.
  - Possible Variations
    - Call the name of the person who is going to receive the ball, and have a reply from this partner - "John?" "Yes, I'm Here"
    - Call the name of the person who is going to receive the ball, without a reply, so the person who is going to receive the ball knows that is going to receive the ball, but the

person passing the ball don't know the exact position of the colleague.

- Passes without calling the name of partners, the only sound will be the produced by the ball.

- Objective

- Introduce the players to the ball, using the hands, in a set-up that keeps the ball always under control, empowering their confidence to handle the ball;
- Introduce the players to the noise of the ball, and the movement of the ball;
- Improve the socialization of the participants

3. Sat, with legs crossed, and with a gap between one participant and the next person in the circle, pass the ball to someone else.

- Possible Variations

- Call the name of the person who is going to receive the ball, and have a reply from this partner - "John?" "Yes, I'm Here"
- Call the name of the person who is going to receive the ball, without a reply, so the person who is going to receive the ball knows that is going to receive the ball, but the person passing the ball don't know the exact position of the colleague.
- Passes without calling the name of partners, the only sound will be the produced by the ball.

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- Introduce the players to the noise of the ball, and the movement of the ball;

- Improve the socialization of the participants
4. Standing up in a circle, legs away, foot touching the colleagues next in the circle, using the hands to catch the ball, throw the ball with the objective of scoring "goals" under the legs of the partners
- Possible Variations
    - Instead of using both hands, use only one to save the balls
    - To add a bit of competition, it is possible to split the group in teams, and count the goals scored by each team
  - Objective
    - Make the participants used to the sound of the ball in the floor, listening it from a standing position
5. Groups of four participants, each group split in pairs, each pair in one sideline, facing the other pair. Each group has one ball, and the first participant runs with the ball dribbling, leaving the ball with the second participant, who takes the ball to the third participant and so on. This is a basic set-up, that can be used for many of the exercises, because the players move in a controlled path, avoiding risks of collision and accident.
- Possible Variations
  - Objective

## Second Session

6. Using the same set-up of the exercise number 5, this time without the ball, just running
- Possible Variations
    1. Use of an "Human Cone", one sighted person who keeps making a regular noise (hand clapping, ball shaking or voice, giving instructions and communicating with the participant)
    2. Use of more than one "Human Cones"



3. Changing the way of handling - side steps, backwards, run with knees up, back-heels up (it can also be made in a way that different ways are mixed - from beginning to the first human cone, jog with knees up, from the first to the second, with back-heels up, and finally, jogging in the direction of the colleague.

- Objective

7. In the same set-up of the 5th exercise, with the ball, but this time, when the participant number one starts, with the ball, the participant number three starts from the other side, and when they are getting closer to each other, the participant without the ball must say "voy" while the other should listen the voice, and dribble around the colleague.

- Possible Variations

- Objective

8. Control the ball, received in the wall, then dribble with the ball straight to the goal and shoot - in the command of the guide.

- Possible Variations

- Use of an human cone, determining the path to be ran by the participant.

- Objective

### Third Session

9. Retrieve the ball - The ball is thrown by the coach or an assistant, and the participant should run towards the ball and bring it back to the starting point

- Possible Variations

1. After retrieving the ball, bring it back doing zig-zags, controlling the ball
2. After retrieving the ball, bring it back controlling it backwards

3. After retrieving the ball, pass the ball back to the instructor

- Objective

At this point, the participants were split in two groups, we are going to call here "Group A" and "Group B". This was the only moment during the workshop where the participants were split according to their skills and abilities, Group A was doing an presentation to the camera team, and the Group B was doing basic exercises, in a slower pace, given that the participants of this group were getting exhausted.

#### 10.Group A and Group B

a.

1. Reduced game, two players against two players, with only one goalkeeper, both teams scoring in the same goal
2. Attack against defense, the players now have pre-determined roles, two trying to score the goal, and two defending the goal.

b.

1. Within a circle, call one of the participants, and after having the answer (e.g. "Maria?" and Maria replies "Yes, I'm here") pass the ball to this colleague.

- Possible Variations

1. Pass the ball without calling the friend
2. Pass the ball with the "bad" foot.

- Objective

2. Penalty kicks - Explain the procedures for taking a penalty kicks, and practicing shoots.

#### Fourth Session

11. Receive and control the ball from the goalkeeper, in the middle of the field, dribble in direction of the goal, and shoot, according to the orientation of the guide

- Possible Variations
  - Receive the ball near the kickboard
  - Receive the ball from a shorter distance
  - Receive the ball from different positions
  - Dribble a shorter distance
  - Have a defender to increase the difficulty
- Objective
  - Experience a combination of techniques with the objective to score the goal, paying attention to the commands of the guide, this will simulate a game situation.

12. Penalty shootouts competition

13. Stretching

## Fifth Session

The Fifth session has been made in the morning of the next day, and the participants were tired and with difficulty to focus in the activities, so it started with a stretching and an exercise that could look like a step back, comparing to the last exercise of the previous day, but it was important to have an strategy to bring the focus back to the activities.

14. Stretching

15. In a circle, run with the ball towards an colleague

- Possible Variations
  - Dribble half of the distance and pass the ball
  - Dribble backwards and pass with the heel

- Objective
  - Work spacial awareness
  - Communication
  - Intimacy with the ball
  - Dribbling skills

### Sixth Session

Game played in two halves, stopping when needed to highlight points that needed more attention, as orientation, communication, safety and also technique issues. There is a fundamental importance of the presence of the coach in the middle of the court as referee, but more than that, the coach has the role to be all the time interacting with the participants, giving orientations mainly related to the safety.

## **Annex 2 – Workshop in Olomouc**

The workshop in Olomouc was organized for players who are totally beginners in the football for the blind; some of them had the opportunity to play non-structured activities with friends, but the sport, with international rules and equipment, was the first experience.

There were four blind participants, and to help with the activities, four assistants participated, one from Czech Republic, one from Zambia, the third from India and the last from France, the assistants had previous experiences with adapted activities for blind people, but never football for the blind. Leading the activities were two specialists, one from Czech Republic and Brazil, who were only giving instructions to the assistants, who were in fact leading the activities. This approach was chosen to ensure that the activities proposed can be replied by coaches and professionals without specific knowledge about the blind football.

This workshop was more compact than the German workshop; it lasted only one day, with four hours of sessions, included the time for the breaks; the workshop was then organized in three sessions of approximated one hour.

With the possibility to have one assistant for each participant, the activities were more individual, so the players could spend more time with the ball, improving their techniques.

### **First Session:**

1. Talk about the safety necessities for the activities, every time that the word "stop" is said, everyone should stop, this should be reinforced that the sighted people are able to foresee possible danger situation.
2. A walk from one board to the other, from one end line to the other. During this walk, a explanations about the game, and the court should be given, the fundamental explanations are about the position of the goalkeeper, the coach and the guide; further explanation was be given

about the size of the court, and details, like the goalposts and the kick boards.

3. Players organized along the kickboard, with the partners placed in front of them, with a distance of approximately five meters. The assistant rolls the ball to the player, who should control the ball with the foot and return it to the assistant. The player should control the ball with the appropriate technique, oriented by the coach.
4. The assistant now stays next to the participant, at the kick board, and the ball is thrown by the coach to the center of the field, and the participant should run towards the ball and bring it back to the starting point.

#### Second Session

5. Again the retrieving activity, but at this time, the players should bring the ball back to the wall (to the coach) dribbling. This was a hard point, because the dribbling technique is very difficult, so in this exercise, the focus was much more about encouraging the players, and giving only specific instructions regarding the technique.
6. Penalty shoot-outs - the participants were taking penalties, and have instructions about how to do the technique in the best way possible, and improving the accuracy of the shots, and also the power. It was reinforced the position of the base foot and the need to hit the ball in it's center.
7. An exercise with interaction of techniques previously taught; the participants should dribble the ball from ten to fifteen meters, then shoot to the goal. This is a hard exercise, because of the dribbling part, but very motivating, because of the shooting part of the exercise. It is very exciting to shoot and score goals, so always that possible, the plan should include shooting skills.

#### Third Session

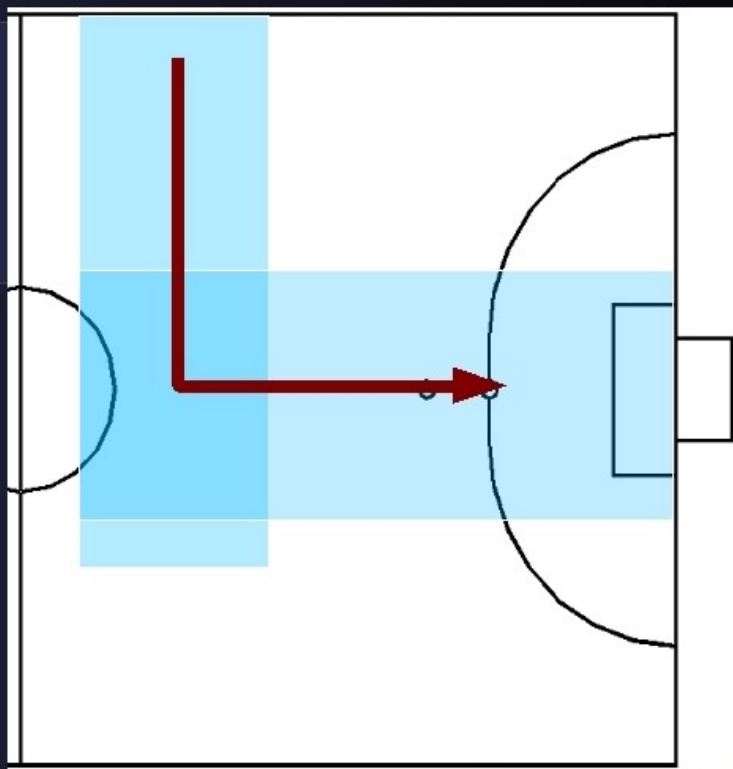
8. Another exercise mixing skills. All the players are placed by the

kickboard in one side of the court, together and more or less 8 meters far from the end line, and the coach stays around the double penalty mark (center of the court, 8 meters far from the goal line). The player should pass the ball to the coach, who retain the ball and work as an human cone; the player will run around the coach, and while passing past the coach, and the coach pass the ball again to the player, who should control the ball and finally shoot, according to the commands of the guide (may be the goalkeeper in training environment).

9. To finish, a simulation of a game situation was made: a situation of a forward against one defender; the participants are placed twenty to twenty five meters away from the goal, and the defender between them and the goal. For this group, of beginners, the coach made the role of the defender, because the players weren't ready yet for situations where two participants were going in opposite directions. In this exercise, the use of "voy" was reinforced and explained.

## Annex 3 – The Cards

### Set-up – Safety



- In Every displacement, an imaginary path has to be made, without any participant in this area.
- Path at least 5m wide
- Wider path in every turn
- Return to position out of the route. (be sure that the player returning is not in the path of the next player)



# Safety - Behaviour



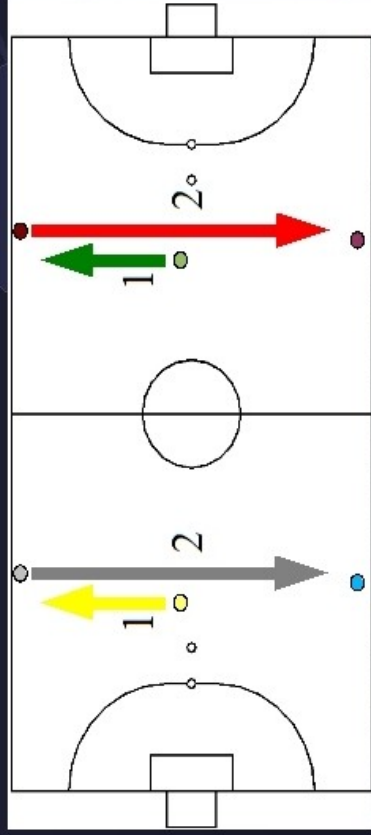
- Every time that the player goes towards the ball, should say “voy”.
- The head cannot be down; a good posture is fundamental.
- In the picture, the green player could protect with the arm from the red because voy was said.
- If one of the players had the head down, they would probably have a shock

# Human Cones



- To determine the path that the players should do, substituting regular cones.
- A sighted person stays producing regular sounds, and the players will follow the path that has been instructed to.
- It will be a turn, to the right or left side, around the human cone.

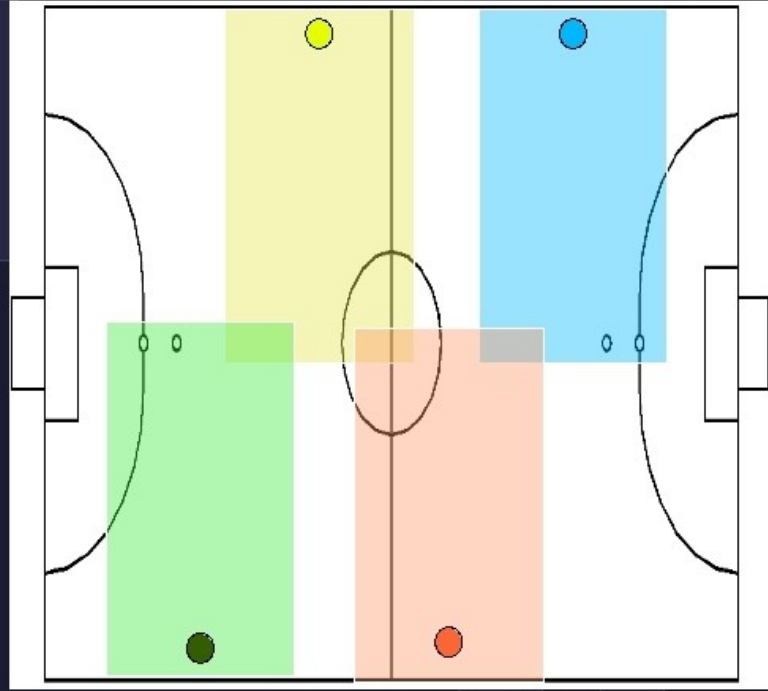
# Simultaneous Activities - I



- In this set-up, many players can do the same activity together, most of the time independently, with cooperation of the partners
- Groups of at least 3 players, one player at time will be moving towards the other side.
- The partner in the opposite side should call the player who is doing the exercise.
- Many exercises can be made in this set-up, with or without the ball.

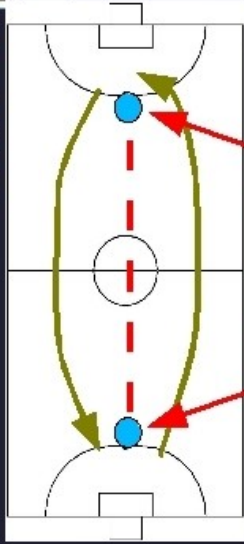


# Simultaneous Activities - II



- It is possible to have more than one player doing an activity at the same time.
- It is important to have a safe zone for each player to move, far from each other and some sound stimuli to orientate him in the way back (may be a partner).
- Special attention to the goalposts and overlapping zones in the middle of the court, the places that offers more risk.

# Set-up - Oval Running



Human Cones



Imaginary safety line

- Set up used mainly for warm-ups and physical trainings, with only two guides, all the team can run.

- The guides will work as human cones, and the players will make a 180° turns around them.

- Is important to keep players away from the imaginary safety line, avoiding collisions with players who are in opposite direction.

# Safety - Silence

- During every moment of the activities/games, the silence is fundamental.
- The coach, or the referee, should always keep the silence in the environment, and only relevant sounds should be allowed.





# Controlling

- The player should control the ball in the position like the picture.



The most important is to set the position of the foot ( $120^\circ$ ) and the legs (distance between them smaller than the ball diameter).

To control a ball when chasing it; is more appropriate to run past the ball, turn and do the basic position.

- Avoid controlling with one leg only.

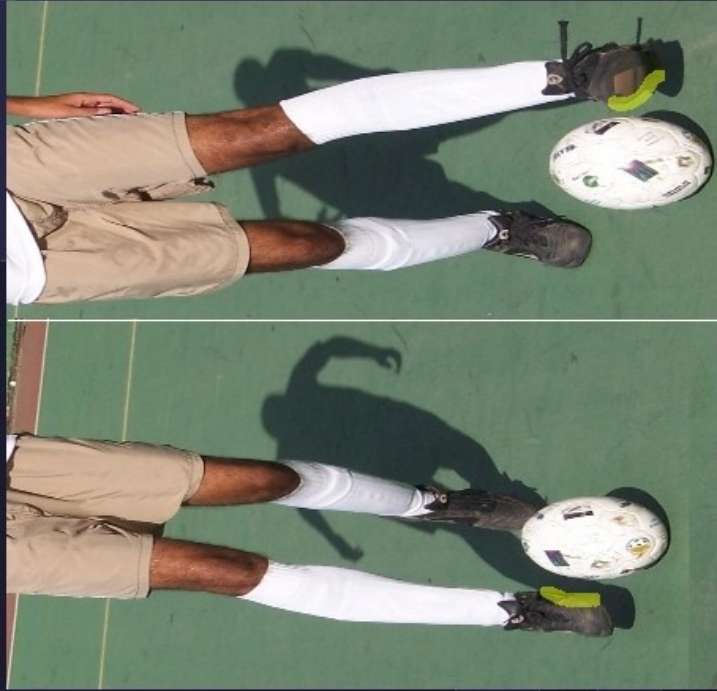
# Passing

- To pass the ball, the internal part of the foot should be used.
- The base foot should be placed in the side of the ball.
- In order to do more precise passes, the toes of the base foot should be “pointing” to the position where the player wants to pass the ball.
- With this the whole body is going to be turned towards the aim of the pass.





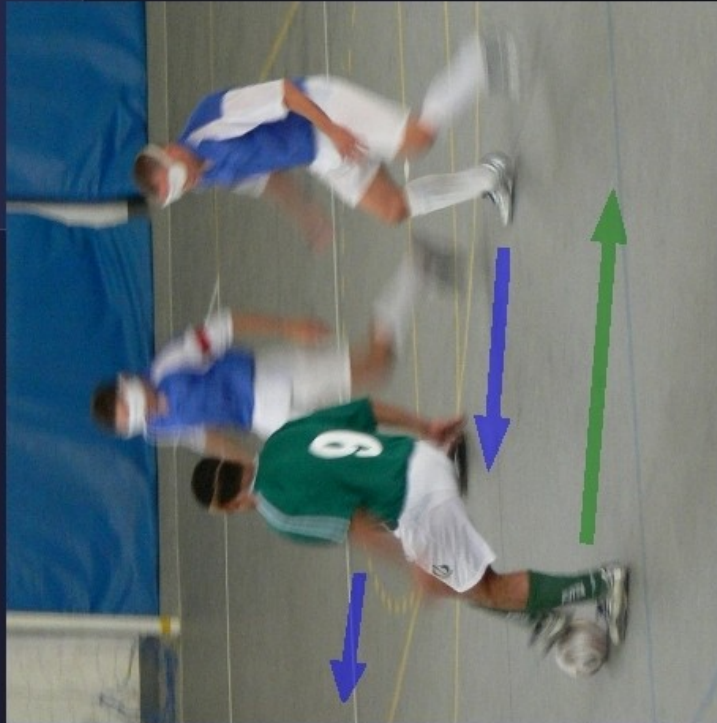
# Dribbling



- The internal part of the foot should be used for the dribbling.
- In every step, the ball has to be touched, being all the time close to the player.
- If the player loses the control of the ball, he should run past the ball, turn and do the basic controlling position to control the ball again and re-start the activity

# Dribble

- The dribble in football for the blind is more based on change of directions.
- The player dribbling the ball should be able to stop and change the direction very fast, avoiding the action of the defenders.
- The player should always pay attention on other player's "voy", to change the direction and do good dribbles.



# Shoot - Steady

- To take penalties and other direct kicks, the player do not runs towards the ball to kick.
- He places the ball next to the base foot, and from this position, he kicks the ball.
- The player may, if desired, hold the top of the ball with the fingertips until the moment that the shot is made.





# Shoot - Moving

- It is a combination of dribbling and shooting skills
- The player, while dribbling, kicks the ball, preferentially with the toes.
- The range of movement of the kicking leg is smaller than the shoot of a sighted player
- The ball should be close to the base foot in the moment of the shoot.



## Annex 4 – TV Olomouc



## Annex 5 – Newspaper Olomouc

### Brazilec učil v Olomouci nevidomé fotbal

Olomouc - Čtyřiaadvacetiletý Matěj Plch je od narození nevidomý. Letos končí svá studia na vysoké škole a jeho velkým koníčkem je fotbal. V sobotu byl jedním z těch, kteří přijeli do Olomouce, aby si pod vedením brazilského trenéra zkusili zahrát fotbal pro nevidomé a něco se o něm i dozvěděli.

Autor: Petra Pášová

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[0×video](#) [0×audio](#) [6×foto](#) [0×komentářů](#) 18.5.2008 19:43 aktualizováno 19.5.2008 0:22

„Snažím se hrát fotbal už šest let, ale ne ten pro nevidomé, protože ten v [České](#) republice není. Ještě na střední škole jsem měl docela dobrou partu kamarádů, kteří přišli na to, že se dá hrát i se mnou a i teď se občas sejdeme a jdeme si zahrát,“ uvedl čtyřiaadvacetiletý mladík, který nastupuje do [zaměstnání](#) v zahraniční počítačové firmě a do [Olomouce](#) přijel z Brněnska.

V sobotu se zájemci o fotbal pro nevidomé v olomoucké sportovní [hale](#) pod vedením brazilského studenta z fakulty tělesné kultury Gabriela Mayera učili základy a pravidla [hry](#), která se zatím v Česku nehraje.

Matěje fotbal hodně baví a o sobotní akci dozvěděl jen náhodou.

„Mrzí mě, že u nás možnost fotbalu pro nevidomé není. O téhle akci jsem se dozvěděl náhodou a strašně by mě mrzelo, kdybych ji propásl. Vždycky jsem chtěl, aby se tady něco takového začalo dělat. Hrozně mě to baví,“ přiznal a pokračoval:





„Pravidla těžká nejsou, ale když to někdo hraje poprvé, tak kontrola míče a vůbec jeho zpracování, posílání přihrávky, tak to musí být nezvyk a něco nového. Jsem zvyklý na lehčí balón, který je také ozvučený. Tenhle je ale o dost těžší, takže je pomalejší a já ho vždycky čekám dřív,“ dodal.

Přestože je Česká republika fotbalovým národem, fotbal pro nevidomé se u nás nehraje.

„Fotbal pro úplně nevidomé je trochu problém. Používají se mantinely podobně jako u hokeje. A na tom to u nás vždycky ztroskotalo, protože pořízení mantinelů stojí asi sto tisíc korun. Přitom to je paralympijský sport a státy jako je Itálie, Španělsko, Brazílie, mají silné týmy,“ řekl spoluorganizátor fotbalové akce Zbyněk Janečka, který učí na Fakultě tělesné kultury Univerzity Palackého a zároveň je i trenérem české reprezentace sjezdového lyžování zrakově postižených.

„Když jsem poprvé slyšel fotbal pro nevidomé, tak jsem si říkal to je nějaká hloupost. Pak jsem viděl světové hráče na videu, tak člověk skoro nechce věřit, že ten, kdo nevidí, je schopný balón vést, slyšet a hrát fotbal jenom s tím, když ho na té ploše koučuje trenér nebo ho navádí spoluhráč,“ pokračoval Janečka.

Fotbal pro nevidomé se hraje ve složení pět na pět, hráči na hřišti musí být úplně nevidomí a hraje se s ozvučeným míčem.

V sobotu se účastníci pod vedením brazilského studenta Gabriela Mayera, který je na stáži na fakultě tělesné kultury, učili hlavně pravidla.

„Je to jeden z prvních pokusů zavést sem fotbal pro zrakově postižené. Myslím si, že by to děti přivítali a každý z těch kluků, kteří tady jsou, někdy zkoušel hrát s vidíci. Mají o to zájem a jsou to fotbaloví nadšenci,“ doplnil ředitel olomouckého Tyflocentra Jan Příborský.