

## P.E. SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

# DODGEBALL



*“The biggest reason I have continued to play this sport over the past 12 years is because of all the friendships I have made with so many amazing people.”*

**Justin Payan**, American dodgeball player and world champion

## INTRODUCTION

Dodgeball (or dodge ball) is the name of a traditional school game, taught in physical education classes, but also popular in informal settings. It can be played either indoors or outdoors. There are many variations of the game, but all involve some players trying to avoid being hit by a ball, that other players are throwing at them.



Players are usually split into teams, though sometimes play individually. A number of medium-sized rubber balls— sometimes only one, sometimes many— are placed in a central location. The objective of each player is to hit an opponent so as to eliminate him or her from the game. The game ends when one player (or team) remains.

In some variations of the game, catching the ball begins a reversal; if the target catches (rather than dodges) the ball, the thrower is eliminated. In other game formats a catch (in addition to eliminating the thrower) also allows another player from the catching team to re-enter.

There are several variations of Dodgeball. They include: Dr. Dodgeball, King’s Court, King Sting, and Prison Ball.

Dr. Dodgeball involves a leader in each team who tries to avoid getting hit. When



players are hit, they fall on the ground and wait for “Dr. Dodgeball” to come and save them. When Dr. Dodgeball saves the fallen players, they can get up and play again. The game ends when Dr. Dodgeball is hit.

King’s Court also involves a leader. If the leader is hit, the game is over. Besides that, the rules are the same as regular dodgeball.

Prisonball is played much like dodgeball, but when a player is hit, he gets put in “prison” behind the opposing team. To get out of prison, he must hit the opposing team from behind. This puts a lot more pressure on the teams as they can be sandwiched between enemies.

## **CONTROVERSY**

Dodgeball, when it emerged, was said to be a “nerd’s sport.” Since players normally were not part of a team, no player had to endure the teasing that would fall upon a player accused of



“causing the team to lose.” As well, the game was seen as having a light-hearted and self-defeating nature and, therefore, more appealing to non-athletic students.

Ironically, dodgeball has come under attack for failing to meet the needs of precisely those students. Opponents of dodgeball have argued that the game provides, for bullies, the excuse to abuse unathletic and unpopular students, by throwing the ball hard enough to cause injury. The aim of King Sting is to throw the ball at others as hard as possible.

After a series of publicized dodgeball injuries in the late 1990s and early 2000s, many schools have removed the game from their physical-education classes, and some have even banned the game entirely. On November 18, 2002, the state of New Jersey banned the game from public schools. New York followed suit shortly after. Schools in Maine, Maryland, Virginia, Texas, Massachusetts and Utah have also banned the sport in recent years.

Many other schools, however, have taken a more moderate approach, allowing dodgeball by using soft foam balls instead of harder rubber balls.

## How Dodge Ball is Played

### First Variation

- Two teams, each team gets ten players per round
- Substitutions may be made between rounds only
- Each team may set their own formations but there must be at least three players within 10 yards of the dividing line
- Players must never cross the dividing line
- First team to completely eliminate the opposing team wins that round; first team to win 10 rounds wins the match
- To eliminate a player you must hit him with a ball or catch a ball he has thrown
- Once a player is hit he must sit on the sidelines for the remainder of the round
- If a teammate catches an opposing player's throw he may designate one teammate who is out to return to the game
- Players who hit someone in the head must sit out the current round and the following round, with no substitution
- Note: a regulation dodge ball is a rubber ball 8 and 1/2 inches in diameter.



### Second Variation

- Divide 16 to 30 students into two teams
- One team forms a circle; the other team stands inside the circle
- Players forming the circle throw the ball at the players inside the circle
- Players inside the circle should run around and “dodge” the ball, trying to not get hit
- Hitting someone in the head doesn't count
- Only players in the outside circle may throw and catch the ball
- Players who get hit join the outside circle to begin throwing the ball at players in the inside circle
- The last player in the inside circle is the winner

**SKILLS & TECHNIQUES**

Most players throw overhand but don't underestimate the power and control of an underhand throw. This would be the same technique you've seen in fast pitch softball.

Practice catching. Remember, bring the ball into your chest. Don't try to catch with just your hands. Have more than one person throw balls at you at the same time during practice.

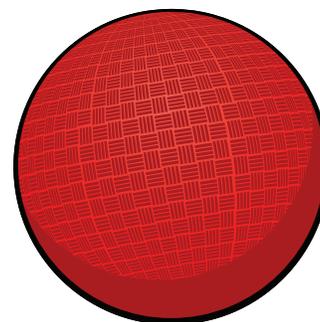
Most players are eliminated because of hesitation. Learn to make your decision quickly, as to whether to dodge or catch. This is crucial.

**EQUIPMENT & CLOTHING**

Wear proper attire. Even if your gym doesn't have footwear requirements, remember, the act of dodging can be dangerous if you slip. Make sure you have shoes that will provide support and traction. Shirts should allow for proper ventilation. For colder gyms or outdoor games dress in layers.

Gloves can provide a good grip for throwing and catching.

The official ball used in tournament and league play is an eight inch rubber-coated foam ball.



**DODGEBALL NOTES**

The National Amateur Dodge Ball Association (NADA) sponsors a variety of indoor and outdoor tournaments for various age groups that include middle school, high school and adult players. The association was created as a recreational pursuit for nontraditional sport enthusiasts. According to NADA, “dodge ball is now safe and more enjoyable with rubber coated foam balls, safety conscious rules and a festive tournament atmosphere. The game fits many programming scenarios: Youths at Risk, children’s activities, summer camps, picnics and corporate challenges. The opportunities are endless!”

The Bexley Cup is awarded to any team winning both indoor and outdoor national championships in the same season. The cup is named for the Bexley Reckers, the first to accomplish this feat.

Another organization, the International Dodge Ball Federation also helps to set standards for safe play in both youth and adult leagues. The IDBF is currently working to establish State Commissioners in the United States to better give everyone a chance to play the game. The IDBF works to establish league play through City Recreation Departments in every city and every state.

Playing Dodge Ball can yield some good physical benefits. Avoiding the ball gives a person a good cardio exercise and can improve a person’s leg and arm strength through jumping and throwing the ball. Trying to avoid the ball or catch it can also improve a person’s hand-eye coordination.

**Check out these websites for more information about Dodge Ball:**

[www.dodgeballusa.com](http://www.dodgeballusa.com)

[www.dodge-ball.com](http://www.dodge-ball.com)