

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

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Evaluation Criteria

For 2027/2028, USABA and USA Goalball are increasing the use of data supported decisions to select the best athletes from the 2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout to fill our 2027/2028 USA Goalball Competition Pool. The tests described below measure technical skills, athleticism, tactical understanding, and mental strength with the aim of assessing all eligible attendees fairly.

During the 2027/2028 USA Goalball Open Tryouts, the following evaluation criteria will be scored:

Technical Skills (40 points)

- Throwing Power and Accuracy (10 pts)
- Defensive Performance (10 pts)
- Sweeping Drill (5 pts)
- Ball Control and Passing (5 pts)
- Offense/Defense +/- (5 pts)
- Shoot-out/Penalties (5 pts)

Athletic Skills (25 points)

- Endurance
 - Cooper's Bike Test (5 pts)
 - Beep Test (5 pts)
- Strength
 - Back Squat 3-rep max (5 pts)
 - Pull-ups (5 pts)
 - Caliper Grip Strength (5 pts)

Tactical Understanding (20 points)

- Adaptability of Game Situations & Reading the Game (10 pts)
- Communication & Teamwork (5 pts)
- Implementation of Coaches' Tactical Instructions (5 pts)

Mental Fortitude (Max. 15 points)

- Stress Resistance (Max. 5 points)
- Willingness to Learn & Discipline (Max. 5 points)
- Respectful Behavior On-and-Off the Court (Max. 5 points)

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

Key notes:

- All tests must be started and attempted by an athlete for their open tryout to be considered complete. Failure to start a test may result in an athlete's removal from consideration from the 2027/2028 Competition Pool. The Emergency Waiver process outlined in the 2027/2028 USA Goalball Competition Pool Selection Procedures Section 8.5 can waive this criterion.
- Any required test medications must be pre-approved through the medical waiver process as outlined 2027/2028 USA Goalball Competition Pool Selection Procedures Section 8.6. No new modifications will be made once the tryout has started.
- An athlete may be removed from the court or any test at any time if they are deemed a safety risk to other participants. The safety concern may be raised by anyone involved in the Tryout, however the final determination must be made by unanimous consent of the three evaluators named in the 2027/2028 USA Goalball Competition Pool Selection Procedures Section 5.
- All scoring which requires evaluator discretion under Tactical Understanding and Mental Fortitude will be scored by a minimum of three (3) evaluators as described in 2027/2028 USA Goalball Competition Pool Selection Procedures Section 5.
- All evaluation activities during the Open Tryout will be performed within the USA Goalball National Team's primary defensive system and will utilize the standardized 9 Number System for court orientation, communication, and tactical execution, as measured on the Front Line (also known as the Team Line).
- Athletes will be expected to demonstrate the ability to understand, apply, and perform within the designated defensive system, as directed by the coaching staff, throughout all testing and gameplay scenarios. For both National Teams, this is currently a front-line defensive alignment, with the wing hash as the primary orientation marker, and both National Teams play a ball-side shift of all three players in their ready positions on the ground in this defensive alignment.
- Video and other performance data captured throughout the duration of the Open Tryout Event may be used to support athlete evaluation and ensure accuracy and consistency in the review process.

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

Detailed Testing Criteria

Technical Skills (Max. 40 points)

- **Throwing Power & Accuracy (Max. 10 points)**

- **(5 pts) IN GAME SCORING ABILITY:** Wings should achieve at least a 5% scoring ability (relation between total number of throws and goals scored) for Competition Pool consideration. Centers are not evaluated with a recommended minimum scoring output, due to their mostly primary defensive role. Throws will be evaluated in this section on their throwing speed, types of throws and top spin of the ball.
- **(5 pts) ACCURACY DRILL:** Each athlete will have 12 minutes to hit each of the shots listed below. Each shot will be made three (3) times unless the athlete runs out of time.
 - Regulations
 - A player has a maximum of 12 minutes (running clock) to hit all shots.
 - A player must throw three (3) attempts for all shots listed, for a total of 30 throws.
 - Each shot will be counted towards the final percentage.
 - Athletes must start on left wing with the first shot (1 – 1). For every throw, the ball will be dropped on the wing-line. With the start of the throws from the 6, the ball will be dropped on the right wing-line.
 - Athletes must do the throws in the listed order.
 - The target zones are measured on the **FRONT LINE** (also known as “team line”). On the throws 3 - 1 and 7 – 9, the ball is allowed to cross the 2 (for 3 – 1) or 8 (for 7 – 9) outside of the wing hash, due to the angle of the throw.
 - Any ball thrown out counts as a missed shot. The same applies to balls hitting the post and not going into the goal.
 - Athletes must achieve at least an accuracy of **20%** to be considered for the Competition Pool.
 - List of shots:
 - 1 – 1
 - 1 – 3
 - 3 - 1
 - 3 – 3
 - 4 – 6
 - 6 – 4
 - 7 – 7
 - 7 – 9
 - 9 – 7
 - 9 – 9

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

- Scoring Rubric
 - >65% = 5 pts
 - 60-64.99% = 4.5 pts
 - 55-59.99% = 4 pts
 - 50-54.99% = 3 pts
 - 45-49.99% = 2 pts
 - 40-44.99% = 1 pt
 - 35-39.99% = 0.5 pts
 - <34.99% = 0 pts
- **Defensive Performance in Game (Max. 10 points)**
 - **IN GAME BLOCKING:** The percentage of balls blocked to goals given up. In-game penalties will be played and will be included in this calculation.
 - Athletes must play in the primary defensive system of the respective national team, currently Front Line for both teams.
 - Athletes not playing in the current national team system during the tryouts are unable to be evaluated and therefore will receive a score of 0.
 - Athletes must achieve a minimum blocking percentage of **70%** to be considered for the Competition Pool. Athletes must face a minimum of 10 shots throughout the course of the tryouts for this calculation to be made.
 - Scoring Rubric
 - >95% = 10 pts
 - 90-94.99% = 9 pts
 - 85-89.99% = 8 pts
 - 80-84.99% = 7 pts
 - 75-79.99% = 6 pts
 - 70-74.99% = 5 pts
 - 65-69.99% = 4 pts
 - 60-64.99% = 3 pts
 - 55-59.99% = 2 pts
 - 50-54.99% = 1 pt
 - <49.99% = 0 pts

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

- **Sweeping Drill ONE SESSION ONLY (Max. 5 points)**

- In the designated session, every wing MUST sweep a minimum of 5 times
 - 2 left to right, 2 right to left, and 1 more to either side of the athlete's choice
- In the designated session, centers MUST move a minimum of 5 times
 - 2 center to right post, 2 center to left post, and 1 more to either side of the athlete's choice
- All positions will be evaluated on effectiveness of their movement and defensive liability when getting back their spot.
- All athletes start with the full 5pts (1 point per sweep) and will lose points if the following instances occur during their sweeps:
 - - 0.5 pt
 - Not throwing out of the gap (3-4 or 6-7) for a WING
 - Not throwing from the post (1-2 or 8-9) for a CENTER
 - A long pause at the crossbar to gain orientation, before the throw starts (a long pause is defined as 2 seconds or longer)
 - Throwing the ball out of bounds.
 - Touching the goal to gain orientation after the player rainbows back
 - - 1 pt
 - Running into a teammate
 - 10 second penalty
 - Getting scored on after a sweep by a quick shot
 - For every sweep not completed during the session

*****NOTE: All other sweeps throughout the tryouts will be evaluated in the Tactical portion of the Tryout Testing Criteria*****

- **Ball Control & Passing (Max. 5 points)**

- The player absorbs the ball after a block (huge benefit).
- Bounce passes are going to the team members (own-goal risk).
- Clean hand-offs.
- Fast ball chasing.
- Rubric:

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

Points	Description
5 – Excellent	Fully blocks and consistently traps the ball, very rarely causes a ball over. When needed, great decision-making with ball distribution at a quick rate.
4 – Good	Mostly blocks and collects the ball. Passes correctly with minor mistakes or occasional delays in ball distribution.
3 – Satisfactory	Occasionally traps the ball and minor form breaks. Understands the options but applies ball distribution inconsistently or hesitantly.
2 – Needs Improvement	Struggles to maintain possession, frequent loose blocks. Slow and frequent errors in decision-making.
1 – Poor	Disregards defensive system and form breaks lead to multiple loose blocks. Consistent errors and balls over.
0 – Missing	No attempt to implement ball control or tactical instructions.

- **Offense-Defense-Relation IN GAME ONLY (Max. 5 points)**

- Goals scored in a game setting will be given as a +1
- Goals given up will be a -1
- In-game penalties will be played and will be included in this calculation.
- After all games are concluded, an overall score will be calculated with the scoring as follows:
 - >+10 = 5 pts
 - +5 to +9 = 4 pts
 - 0 to +4 = 3 pts
 - -1 to -4 = 2 pts
 - -5 to -9 = 1 pts
 - <-10 = 0 pts

- **Shoot-out and Penalties (Max. 5 points)**

- Every game will end with a penalty shootout, where each athlete must throw once and defend once. The order will be determined by the teams themselves. Each team must change their shootout order after every game.
- These will not be included in an athlete +/- calculation or blocking percentage.

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

- Players can achieve points as follows:
 - *Offense (3 points)*
 - 3 points for scoring > 60%
 - 2 points for scoring 50-59.99%
 - 1 point for scoring 40-49.99%
 - 0 points for scoring <39.99%
 - *Defense (2 points)*
 - 2 points for >50% blocking (out and penalties count in favor of the defender)
 - 1 point 40-49.99% blocking
 - 0 points <39.99% blocking

Athletic Skills (Max. 25 points)

- **Endurance (Max. 10 points)**
 - **(5 pts) Cooper's Bike Test - Estimated VO2 Max:** Each athlete will begin with a 5-minute warm-up. Following the warm-up, the resistance on the bike will be set to level 10. Once the resistance has been adjusted, the athlete will begin the test upon instruction from the Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist. The duration of the test lasts 12 minutes, during which each athlete will attempt to travel the greatest possible distance. At the conclusion of the test, the total distance traveled by each athlete will be recorded.
 - Rubric:
 - Male**
 - Elite (5.4+ miles) = 5 Points
 - Good (4.4 miles- 5.39 miles) = 4 Points
 - Average (3.4 miles- 4.39 miles) = 3 Points
 - Below Average (2.4 miles- 3.39 miles) = 2 Points
 - Poor (1.39 miles- 2.39 miles) = 1 Point
 - Not Scorable (<1.38 miles) = 0 Points
 - Female**
 - Elite (4.4+ miles) = 5 Points
 - Good (3.4 miles- 4.39 miles) = 4 Points
 - Average (2.4 miles- 3.39 miles) = 3 Points
 - Below Average (1.4 miles – 2.39 miles) = 2 Points
 - Poor (.39 miles- 1.39 miles) = 1 Point
 - Not Scorable (<.38 miles) = 0 Points

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

- **(5 pts) Beep Test – On-court specific endurance**
 - The test is conducted in the following order: the athlete has to set up on the front-line hash, after the beep sound, they must do a full diving motion (elbows and knees extended), get up and get to the highball line, backpaddle to the goal and get back into their set-up form on the front line before the next beep.
 - Athletes will get one warning for the following actions:
 - Not back in time before the next audible signal
 - Not completing a full diving motion
 - Missing the highball line
 - Not touching the goal
 - After the warning, the next time any of the above actions occur, the test is over. The round the athlete is eliminated on is the recorded score.
 - Eye shades WILL be worn for this test.
 - **Rubric**
 - Level 15_10 to 12_1 = 0 pts
 - Level 11_10 to 11_1 = 1 pt
 - Level 10_10 to 10_1 = 2 pts
 - Level 9_10 to 9_6 = 3 pts
 - Level 9_5 to 9_1 = 4 pts
 - Level 8_10 and better = 5 pts
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- **Strength (Max. 15 points)**
 - **(5 pts) BB Back Squat 3 rep max:** Athletes will be required to reach a minimum depth of at least 90 degrees for a rep to count. Form will be reviewed and approved by an accredited Strength & Conditioning Coach during each rep.
 - **Rubric:**
 - **Male**
 - Elite (1.76+ X Bodyweight) = 5 Points
 - Above Average (1.51 – 1.75 X Bodyweight) = 4 Points
 - Average (1.26-1.5 X Bodyweight) = 3 Points
 - Below Average (1.01-1.25 X Bodyweight) = 2 Points
 - Poor (0.76 - 1.0 X Bodyweight) = 1 Points
 - Not scorable (<0.75 X Bodyweight) = 0 Point
 - **Female**
 - Elite (1.51+ X Bodyweight) = 5 Points
 - Above Average (1.26 – 1.5 X Bodyweight) = 4 Points
 - Average (1.01-1.25 X Bodyweight) = 3 Points

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

- Below Average ($0.76 - 1.0 \times \text{Bodyweight}$) = 2 Points
 - Poor ($0.51 - 0.75 \times \text{Bodyweight}$) = 1 Points
 - Not scorable ($<0.5 \times \text{Bodyweight}$) = 0 Point
- **(5 pts) Pull-Ups:** Athletes may complete this test with either a neutral grip (palms facing each other) or standard grip (palms facing away). The chin must be over the bar to complete the rep. Elbows must be fully extended at the bottom of their rep. Athletes can have bent knees during their reps, however, there can be no swinging or kipping pull-ups (i.e. using momentum to assist each rep). Athletes will not be allowed any hand treatment during the pull-ups, including but not limited to chalk, gloves or any covering on the bar. Form will be reviewed and approved by an accredited Strength & Conditioning Coach during each rep.
 - **Rubric:**
 - **Male**
 - Elite (21+ reps) = 5 Points
 - Above Average (16-20 reps) = 4 Points
 - Average (11-15 reps) = 3 Points
 - Below Average (6-10 reps) = 2 Points
 - Poor (1-5 reps) = 1 Point
 - Not scorable 0 reps = 0 pts
 - **Female**
 - Elite (13+ reps) = 5 Points
 - Above Average (10-12 reps) = 4 Points
 - Average (7-9 reps) = 3 Points
 - Below Average (4-6 reps) = 2 Points
 - Poor (1-3 reps) = 1 Point
 - Not scorable (0 reps) = 0 pts
 - **(5 pts) Dynamometer Grip Strength Test:** Athletes will complete a grip strength assessment using a handheld dynamometer. Each athlete will perform one trial with each hand, beginning with the dynamometer held at their side. On the tester's command, the athlete will keep their arm straight and raise it to shoulder height while simultaneously squeezing the dynamometer with maximal effort. The maximal grip contraction should be maintained for no longer than 3 seconds. Once completed, a Certified Strength and Conditioning Coach will record the peak grip strength (lbs/kg) achieved for each hand and divide by two to obtain overall ranking.

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

○ **Rubric**

- **Male**
 - Elite (>59 kg) = 5 Points
 - Above Average (52-58 kg) = 4 Points
 - Average (45-51 kg) = 3 Points
 - Below Average (38-44 kg) = 2 Points
 - Poor (31-37 kg) = 1 Point
 - Not scorable (<31 kg) = 0 pts
- **Female**
 - Elite (>38 kg) = 5 Points
 - Above Average (33-37 kg) = 4 Points
 - Average (28-32 kg) = 3 Points
 - Below Average (23-27 kg) = 2 Points
 - Poor (18-22 kg) = 1 Point
 - Not scorable (<18 kg) = 0 pts

Tactical Understanding (Max. 20 points)

- **Adaptability of Game Situations & Reading the Game (Max. 10 points)**
 - Rubric:

Points	Evaluator's Assessment Description
10 – Excellent	The player consistently demonstrates exceptional defensive positioning, maintaining awareness of opponents, space, and team shape. Adapts seamlessly to changing game situations, making intelligent adjustments with precision and anticipation.
8 – Strong	The player shows solid defensive awareness and positioning in most scenarios. Adapts well to dynamic play and recognizes tactical shifts with minimal hesitation. Minor positional lapses may occur under pressure.
6 – Good	The player maintains acceptable positioning and shows a general understanding of defensive structure. Adaptability is adequate but occasionally delayed when responding to fast-changing game dynamics.

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

Points	Evaluator's Assessment Description
4 – Developing	The player's positioning is inconsistent, often leaving gaps or being drawn out of shape. Struggles to adapt quickly to evolving game situations and may require frequent guidance or correction.
2 – Needs Improvement	The player displays poor defensive positioning and minimal awareness of tactical shape. Rarely adapts effectively to game changes, leading to defensive vulnerabilities.
0 – No Observable Performance	No clear evidence of defensive positioning or adaptability. The player's engagement or participation in defensive phases is minimal or absent.

- **Communication, Leadership & Teamwork (Max. 5 points)**

- Rubric:

Points	Description
5 – Excellent	Consistently communicates clearly and effectively with teammates and coaches. Demonstrates strong teamwork, supports others, and maintains positive collaboration throughout.
4 – Good	Communicates well most of the time and contributes positively to team dynamics. Minor lapses in communication or cooperation.
3 – Satisfactory	Basic communication and teamwork are present but inconsistent. Occasionally disengaged or unclear in interactions.
2 – Needs Improvement	Rarely communicates or collaborates effectively. Limited contribution to team cohesion or understanding.
1 – Poor	Shows little to no communication or teamwork; may cause confusion or disrupt team efforts.
0 – Missing	No observable communication or teamwork effort.

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

- **Implementation of Coaches' Tactical Instructions (Max. 5 points)**

- Rubric:

Points	Description
5 – Excellent	Fully understands and applies all tactical instructions accurately during play. Consistently aligns decisions and movements with the coach's game plan.
4 – Good	Applies most tactical instructions correctly with minor mistakes or occasional lapses in execution.
3 – Satisfactory	Understands the tactics but applies them inconsistently or hesitantly. Some key instructions missed.
2 – Needs Improvement	Struggles to follow tactical directions; frequent errors in positioning or decision-making.
1 – Poor	Disregards or fails to understand tactical instructions; plays with little connection to the coach's strategy.
0 – Missing	No attempt to implement tactical instructions.

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

Mental Fortitude (Max. 15 points)

- **Stress Resistance (Max. 5 points)**
 - Rubric:

Evaluator's Discretion Description

Points	
5 – Excellent	The player consistently maintains composure under pressure, showing calm decision-making and emotional control in all game situations.
4 – Good	The player generally handles stressful moments well, maintaining focus with only brief lapses in composure or concentration.
3 – Satisfactory	The player shows moderate stress resistance, but performance may fluctuate in tense or high-pressure scenarios.
2 – Needs Improvement	The player struggles to manage emotions or decision-making under pressure, leading to visible performance drops.
1 – Poor	The player displays little control under stress, frequently losing focus or composure.
0 – Missing	No discernible stressful situations were encountered or insufficient observation to assess.

- **Willingness to Learn & Discipline (Max. 5 points)**
 - Rubric:

Evaluator's Discretion Description

5 – Excellent	The player demonstrates a strong willingness to learn, consistently applies feedback, and exhibits excellent discipline on and off the court.
4 – Good	The player is receptive to coaching and maintains good discipline, though occasional reminders may be needed.
3 – Satisfactory	The player shows some openness to learning but inconsistently applies feedback or displays uneven discipline.

2026 USA Goalball Open Tryout Testing Criteria

Points	Evaluator's Discretion Description
2 – Needs Improvement	The player shows limited receptiveness to coaching and struggles to maintain discipline consistently.
1 – Poor	The player resists feedback and demonstrates poor discipline, affecting performance and development.
0 – Missing	Insufficient opportunity to evaluate learning attitude or discipline.

- **Respectful Behavior On-and-Off the Court (Max. 5 points)**

- Rubric:

Points	Evaluator's Discretion Description
5 – Excellent	The player consistently exhibits respect toward coaches, teammates, referees, and opponents both on and off the court. A strong role model in conduct.
4 – Good	The player is generally respectful and courteous, with only occasional minor lapses in tone or behavior.
3 – Satisfactory	The player usually maintains respect but may occasionally show frustration or inattentiveness.
2 – Needs Improvement	The player demonstrates inconsistent respect or professionalism, requiring reminders or intervention.
1 – Poor	The player frequently displays disrespectful or unsportsmanlike behavior.
0 – Missing	Behavior not sufficiently observed to make an assessment.