

Let's Play Broomball

What is broomball? The easy answer is FUN. Others have described the sport as ice hockey for nonskaters.

Broomball originated in Canada in the early 1900s. Since then broomball has grown into a popular sport on all levels. Men's, women's and co-ed teams participate competitively and recreationally.

If you aren't a broomball player, you may have been exposed to broomball as entertainment or a fundraising event where local media celebrities compete against each other on an ice rink playing with house brooms and a recreation ball. However, when people witness the antics of their nightly news person slipping to the seat of his/her pants, few realize that what they're seeing is the crude form of an actual sport which is sweeping the country.

Broomball is played by two opposing teams on an ice hockey rink with rules and strategies similar to those of hockey, minus the body checking. Each team consists of five players plus a goal keeper. For recreational broomball on a smaller rink, each team usually consists of four players and a goal keeper.

Regardless of the size of the rink, no team, at the onset of the game, should have more than five players plus a goal keeper or fewer than four players plus a goal keeper.

Competitive broomball is played on resurfaced ice. Recreational broomball can be played on either non-resurfaced or resurfaced ice. Goals are scored when the ball, entering from the front, passes between the goal posts, below the top post and goes completely across the goal line. A game can be played in one hour of ice time.

Competitive broomball players wear padded sponge-rubber shoes to enhance traction on the ice. They're also required to wear gloves, helmets and pads. Recreational players may wear tennis shoes when playing on non-resurfaced ice. Players strike a ball the size of a small soccer ball with specially designed brooms made of corn straw dipped in rubber or solid molded rubber. Elbow pads and shin and/or kneepads are recommended for recreational play and required for competitive play.

In Your Rink

Ice arena managers across the country have discovered the benefits of adding a broomball program to fill vacant ice time. Arenas in shopping malls and close to college campuses have been especially successful in setting up recreational programs in previously empty time slots, and find them expanding into popular attractions.

Broomball is not only popular in northern states; some of the best young broomball programs exist in California, North Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma and Florida.

For Fun

Recreational broomball teams are easily formed since skill in skating is not required to participate, and initial equipment costs are relatively low compared to those of other sports. Also, the sponge rubber bottoms of regulation broomball shoes grip the ice and decrease mobility which serves as an equalizer for size differences in players, thus making the sport more enjoyable for all.

For Sport

For those who become more serious about broomball, there is a circuit of highly competitive tournaments across North America. Many of these tournaments offer cash prizes for the winning teams to help supplement travel expenses. They also provide intermediate, co-ed and recreational divisions.

Future of Broomball

The future for the sport of broomball is bright with extensive play throughout North America and growing interest in the sport in Scandinavia, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Germany and Russia. The fourth World Broomball Championships are scheduled for November of 2000.

So, whether you're planning a broomball game with house brooms on a frozen lake, or planning strategy for your team for the World Championships, enjoy yourself. Having fun is the name of the game in any sport.

For more information on broomball, check www.broomball.com, or contact Mick Sletten at 612-472-6331. Copies of ISI's Broomball Rules and Regulations are available from ISI Shipping Department, 972-735-8800, extension 213.