



# Press Release

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## **U.S. Boccia National Championship Heads to Georgia**

WARM SPRINGS, Ga. -- Athletes with physical disabilities from throughout the country will converge on Warm Springs, Ga. July 9-12 for the U.S. Boccia National Championship. BlazeSports America is hosting the tournament which will bring together over 60 athletes and coaches at the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation to compete in this fascinating sport of skill and strategy.

“Boccia has been a part of the Paralympic Games since 1984. It is similar to the game that originated long ago in Italy and its popularity has spread worldwide,” said Jerry McCole, director of the BlazeSports National Disability Sport Alliance, a division of BlazeSports America. “We are very excited to bring what is expected to be a spirited competition to Georgia.”

One of the fastest growing Paralympic sports, Boccia can be played one-on-one, in pairs, or in teams of three. Unlike its cousin lawn bowling, Boccia is played on a specially marked court on a gymnasium floor. The object of the game is to throw or roll game balls so that they land as close as possible to the target ball called the jack. After all of the balls have been thrown, the closest team receives the number of points equal to the number of balls that they have closer to the jack than their opponent’s closest ball.

Boccia was originally presented as a sport for athletes with cerebral palsy but is now open to all athletes with significant physical disabilities. The sport tests the athlete’s concentration, accuracy and ability to strategize.

Boccia is just one of the competitive sports offered by BlazeSports America, the legacy organization of the 1996 Atlanta Summer Paralympic Games. BlazeSports provides sports training, competitions, summer camps, leadership training, and recreational opportunities for youth and adults who use wheelchairs, have a visual impairment, have an amputation, or who have a neurological disability such as cerebral palsy.

Local partners for the U.S. Boccia National Championship include Sportaid, New Mobility Magazine, Publix Super Markets Charities and Resurgens Orthopaedics. For more information visit the BlazeSports America website at [www.blazesports.org](http://www.blazesports.org)

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