GOALPOST SAFETY

Mobile / free - standing goalposts

Free-standing goals need to be appropriately stabilised in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Stabilisation of goalposts can be significantly affected by poor installation techniques, as well as by poor ground conditions. Consequently, the most reliable methods of stabilising free-standing goals is by attaching the back bar to permanent fixing points via eyebolts and stainless-steel loops set in concrete blocks, suitable attachment points on a permanent fence or wall, or using weights attached to the goal's back bar either in the correct positions as specified by the manufacturer, or integral to the goal. In all circumstances any equipment used to stabilise goals should be kept away from the immediate playing area to protect players and officials.

Due to uncertainty in types of ground and/or ground conditions, the use of pins, pegs, U-staples or screw in anchors on natural turf pitches is not generally recommended. However, if there is evidence that they are effective under the worst predictable ground conditions on the site in question, then they may be considered. Please refer to the goalpost manufacturer guidelines for the most appropriate form of stabilisation method.

Temporary posts

Slalom poles, corner flags and plastic cones are frequently used to mark goals for training. Clubs and coaches should look at the risks inherent when using any equipment and should follow manufacturers guidelines. All equipment should be maintained appropriately and there should be an emergency action plan in place so that emergency care can reach injured players in a rapid response time. Children should be supervised at all times.

U peg anchor

Handbag weight

Ground screw anchor

Selecting the right type of goal

"Football club admits failures after goalpost crushes boy"

BBC Wales July 2014

When selecting portable goals, those responsible for the management of a sports facility should consider the precise types of activity that may take place. A risk assessment is recommended to be undertaken in order to determine whether the chances of an injury occurring are likely to be higher due to a goal falling on to a person when it is being moved or due to the goal tipping or collapsing when it is being misused.

Goals, especially larger sized versions, can be either free standing and therefore easily moved (although it is important to make proper provision for their storage when not in use) or socketed when semi-permanent installation is required.

Socketed goals are normally used on sports fields where the goal is intended to be erected for a long period of time (often the full season) or where trained ground staff with suitable equipment are responsible for the erection, dismantling and movement of the goal, meaning the risk of injury from moving it is low.

Portable goals are designed to allow frequent movement. They are often used on synthetic turf pitches and natural grass training pitches and in indoor sports halls. As the goals are not socketed, they require some other form of restraining mechanism to prevent them from tipping. It is essential that portable goals are always anchored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Traditionally, larger goals have been designed to be robust constructions that can withstand the types of misuse that might occur on unsupervised sites (such as people swinging on the crossbar, etc.). To withstand such misuse the goals are normally quite heavy (a full-sized football goal typically weighs over 70 kg).

"Schoolboy found with bones sticking out of mouth and neck after goalpost crush"

Scottish Metro Feb 2015

Concerns have been expressed that there is actually a greater risk of injury occurring when a portable goal is being moved or when it has not been correctly anchored and it tips and falls on to someone. Recognizing that on secure and well managed sites the chances of misuse are low, lighter-weight goals are also now available. These comply with the relevant laws of the game for the sport being played, but they are not normally as robust as heavier versions of the same-sized goal, meaning they may have a shorter life expectancy.

Consideration also needs to be given to the potential for a lighter-weight goal to be damaged sooner due to its less robust construction, meaning that it will require more frequent maintenance inspections and possible replacement.

If a potential purchaser is unsure which type of goal is most appropriate for their facility, they are advised to seek guidance from the FA.

"A tragic fatality on a sports pitch has implications for health and safety enforces"

Environmental News

Remember to use goal posts safely at all times.

Goalpost safety guidelines

The Football Association, along with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Health and Safety Executive and the British Standards Institution, would like to draw your attention to the following guidelines for the safe use of goalposts. Several serious injuries and sadly even fatalities have occurred in recent years as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of goalposts. Safety is always of paramount importance and everyone in football must play their part to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future:

1

For safety reasons goalposts of any size (including those which are portable and not installed permanently at a pitch or practice field) must always be anchored securely to the ground or have a weighted back bar.

Under no circumstances should children or adults be allowed to climb on, swing or play with the structure of the goalposts.

2

The use of metal cup hooks on any part of a goal frame was banned from the commencement of season 2007-08 and match officials have been instructed not to commence matches where such net fixings are evident for safety reasons. Nets may be secured by plastic fixings, arrow head shaped plastic hooks or tape and not by metal cup hooks. Any metal cup hooks should be removed and replaced. New goalposts should not be purchased if they include metal cup hooks.

3

Goalposts which are “homemade” or which have been altered from their original size or construction should not be used under any circumstances as they potentially pose a serious safety risk. There is no BS/CEN standard for wooden goals.

4

There is no BS/CEN standard for wooden goals and it is unlikely that wooden goals will pass a load or stability test. All wooden goals previously tested by independent consultants have failed strength and stability tests. The FA recommends that wooden goals should be replaced with compliant metal, aluminium or UPVC goalposts (this was updated in March 2012).

For reference, you should note that The FA and BSI, in conjunction with the industry, have developed standards for goalposts – BSEN 748:2013+A1:2018 and BS EN 16579:2018. It is strongly recommended that you ensure that all goals purchased comply with the relevant standard. A Code of Practice BS 8461 has also been completed and copies of all of these standards are available from the BSI via their website at www.bsigroup.com

Funding for goalposts and the replacement of unsafe goals is available via the Football Foundation and eligibility criteria and further details can be obtained from their website at www.footballfoundation.org.uk

The FA together with representatives from the industry, sports governing bodies and Government have prepared guidance notes for pitch users and pitch providers, which summarise the key priorities of the BSI's Code of Practice and provide further details on the information included above. These details are featured within the facilities section of The FA's website at www.TheFA.com/my-football

REMEMBER TO USE GOALPOSTS SAFELY AT ALL TIMES