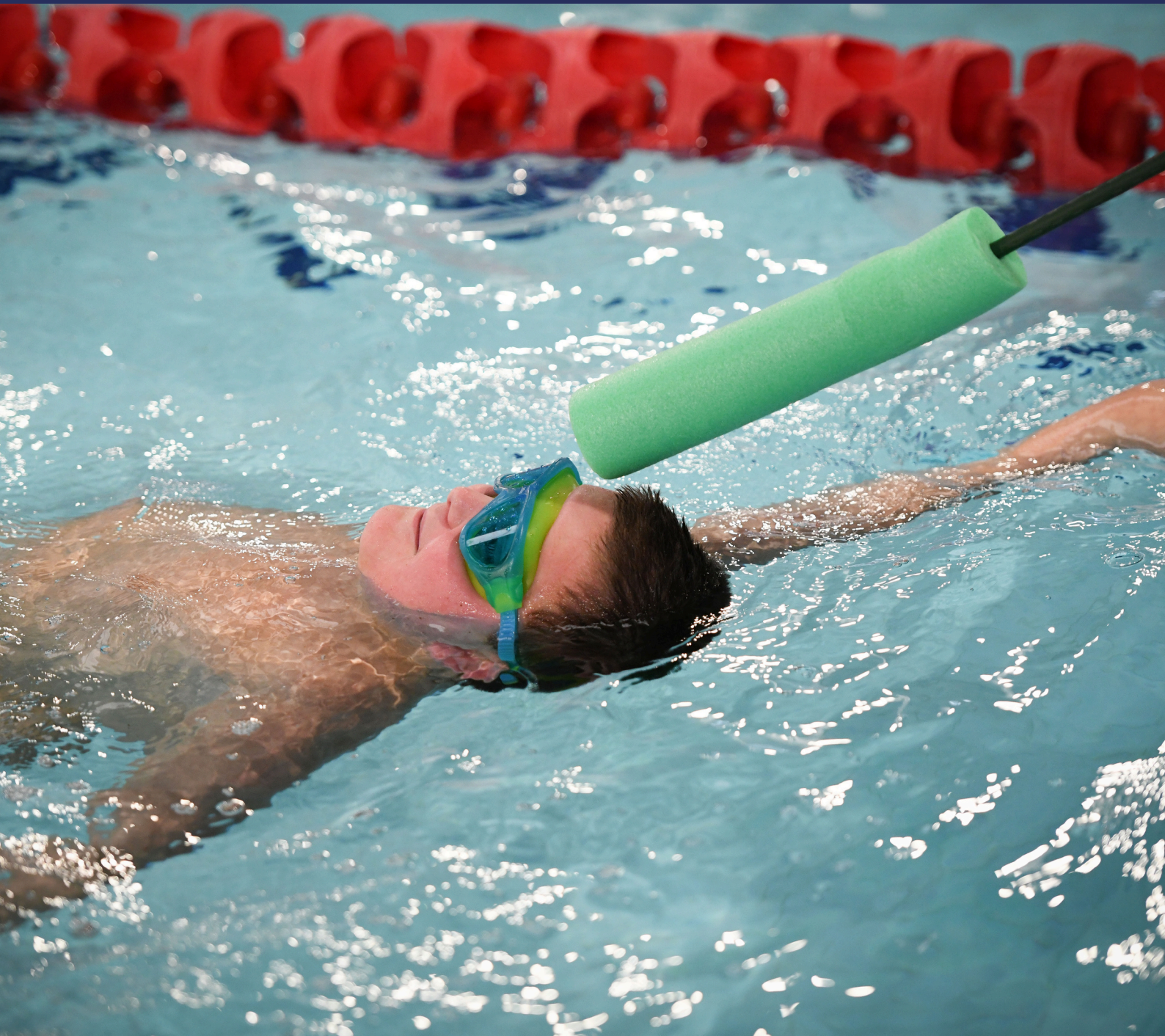


VISION

Winter/Christmas 2024



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Chief Executive's Message

Welcome to the latest edition of our Vision publication. We have the latest news from blind and partially sighted sports, as well as the latest activities and projects we have been working on at British Blind Sport in recent months.



Recent highlights include our successful annual BBS Junior Swim Festival at the Tudor Grange Leisure Centre, where young athletes showcased their swimming skills in competitive and fun races. We also hosted our final Have a Go Day of the year in Gloucestershire, which provided participants with the opportunity to try new sports and links with their local coaches and clubs.

Looking ahead to 2025, we are delighted to be working on a range of exciting projects and services including the launch of season two of our 'Let's Talk VI Sport' podcast, where we will be interviewing a host of athletes and coaches about their sporting journeys. We are also finalising plans for the second BBS UK Showdown Championship which will be held in February, following on from the success of our inaugural competition earlier this year.

Next year is a milestone year for BBS with our 50th anniversary. We are busy planning a series of special events and initiatives to celebrate which we are excited to share with you in the new year.

We would like to thank our partners for their continued support and contribution to our projects and services and we look forward to continuing to work together to make a positive difference through sport for blind and partially sighted people across the UK.

The team at British Blind Sport would like to wish our members, partners, and volunteers a very Merry Christmas and wish you a happy and healthy 2025. We look forward to seeing you at BBS events throughout the year.

Alaina MacGregor, Chief Executive of British Blind Sport

BBS Junior Swim Festival 2024

BBS hosted the annual Junior Swim Festival on Sunday 10th November at the Tudor Grange Leisure Centre in Solihull, bringing together aspiring swimmers aged 3-17 for a day of competitive swimming races, swimming and diving lessons, and a chance to meet Paralympic swimmers.

The annual event featured the BBS Swimming Gala which included competitive races across multiple swimming styles, including backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. Participants also had the opportunity to receive swimming and diving lessons from Tudor Grange Leisure Centre and Swim England instructors.

Following the competitive races, BBS was delighted to welcome three special guests to share their swimming journeys with participants and their families. Paralympian and Channel Swimmer, Melanie Barratt, spoke to the children and their families about her journey into swimming, her experience at the Atlanta and Sydney Paralympics and her historic Channel Swim earlier this year. Fresh from their debut at the Paralympics in Paris, Scarlett and Eliza Humphreys shared stories from Paris, offering participant's firsthand insight into the latest Paralympic competition.

It was great to have our three special guests there on the day to inspire the next generation of swimmers.

We would like to thank Tudor Grange Leisure Centre, Swim England and New College Worcester for their continued support of our annual BBS Junior Swim Festival. We look forward to planning next year's event!



“

Great team at this event, so many people giving up their time to put this event on! We don't underestimate the amount of preparation/organisation which goes into these events, and it was so well organised. We are so glad we found out about it and could attend; we would love to come again!

”

Parent of participant

The last Have a Go Day of the year

Our final Have a Go Day of the year took place in Gloucester, in partnership with Active Gloucestershire, on Saturday 19th October.

Coaches from cricket, baseball, and judo were there on the day to support blind and partially sighted participants with learning new techniques and building confidence in the various sports.

BBS Participation Officer, Vicky Cook, said following the day: “The free taster session held in October played a crucial role in challenging common misconceptions among people with sight loss about sport and physical activity. The event helped participants discover local sporting opportunities, whilst also building their confidence.”

Feedback from the event

“Chris really enjoyed taking part in the Judo session and is very keen to get started in the next couple of weeks at our local club.” – parent of Gloucester Have a Go Day participant

“Cricket was lovely family game where the coach got all the families involved and adapted to everyone’s skill level.” – parent of Gloucester Have a Go Day participant

To be the first to find out about our 2025 Have a Go Day programme, follow British Blind Sport on social media or sign up to

“The coaches for the blind baseball were amazing and everything was explained clearly and made accessible, she especially enjoyed the parents wearing sleep shades and joining in.

Parent of participant



BBS Tenpin Section

In November, 16 teams from across the country competed at the 2024 Primary Club Pairs Tenpin Finals at the Rotherham Superbowl in Sheffield.

The league started in mid-May and consisted of 40 teams (four divisions of 10), with the top teams (four from each division) qualifying for the main final.

Tony Clark, BBS Tenpin Chair, said: "The final was very close! Congratulations to the winning team, Split Happens, from Taunton. Bats Blind Ambition, from Swindon took second place, and Dreaming Spires, from Oxford finished third.

Each team played eight games of bowling within two groups, which is run in a round-robin system, with the last game being the positional game (winner of Group A versus winner of Group B for first and second place) and so on.

The teams came together at the Royal Victoria Hotel on the Thursday. With help from our volunteers, the competitors were shuttled from the train and coach stations to the hotel.



The Merit of Achievement Award went to Meena Rattu, who is a member of the Eye-Can Wolverhampton team who attended the event at very short notice after another team dropped out. The team managed to travel up in the morning and arrive just in time for the start of the competition.

The tournament is sponsored and mainly funded by the Primary Club to whom we are very grateful. Other monies are raised from the league entries and takings from the awards dinner raffle. The whole tournament was a great success thanks to the sponsors and the organising committee. Thank you, once again, to the Primary Club from all the BBS Tenpin contingent - we really appreciate everything you do for us."

Tony added: "Shortly after the November finals, we heard the devastating news that Graham Moore MBE had passed away. He was a long-term supporter of Tenpin and a great friend. He will truly be missed."

Christmas Appeal 2024

Give the gift of
sport this Christmas

To support our work, please donate at:
www.britishblindsport.org.uk/christmas



At BBS, we believe in the transformative power of sport and physical activity. In a world where isolation can be a reality for many with sight loss, sport and physical activity is more than just exercise – regular physical activity is not only about good physical health, it also boosts confidence, increases resilience and builds friendships which all add up to better health and wellbeing.

In the UK, only 12% of people with sight loss participate in regular physical activity, while 64% are keen to take part but experience barriers to access.

Our mission is to break down these barriers and make sport and physical activity accessible to all blind and partially sighted people in the UK. This Christmas, your donation can help us to expand our services, reach more blind and partially sighted people and break down those barriers to participation.

How your support can help BBS

A **gift of £15** could provide an hour of personalised 1-1 support to a blind or partially sighted individual via the BBS Helpline, addressing and overcoming the unique challenges faced by people with sight loss

A **gift of £25** could provide a 'First Steps' pack for blind and partially sighted children - this project provides specialist support that empowers children aged 3-11 years with the skills and confidence they need to become more physically active and reach their potential

A **gift of £50** could provide a 60 minute 'Active At Home' workout class that can be accessed by 100s of blind and partially sighted people from their own home. Helping them, wherever they are, to get active and stay active, as part of our supportive online community

To support BBS this Christmas, please visit:
www.britishblindsport.org.uk/christmas

Let's Talk VI Sport podcast

Earlier this year we launched the first season of our 'Let's Talk VI Sport' podcast where we interviewed blind and partially sighted athletes, coaches and industry professionals including: David Clarke OBE, Lizzi Jordan, Ellen Buttrick, Zac Shaw, Oscar Kelly and Melanie Barratt.



**Let's Talk
VI Sport**

Each episode is a candid conversation about the guest's journey into sport, their achievements and challenges they faced along the way, as well as highlighting the importance of sport and physical activity in their lives.

Let's Talk VI Sport season 1 is available to listen to on [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#).

We are currently working on season 2 which we will be releasing in early 2025. Be sure to subscribe on Apple Podcasts or Spotify to be one of the first to hear our new guests.

Stay fit with Active At Home



Active at Home:
Audio-led workout classes

Our Active At Home workouts are the perfect way to keep physically active this winter from home.

These accessible, audio-led workouts are available across [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#) and [YouTube](#).

Workouts across HIIT, Boxercise, Legs, Bums & Tums, and Yoga will be available for users to access at any time from their home.

For more information on BBS' Active at Home programme, please visit the [BBS website](#).

Join Team BBS at next year's London Landmarks Half Marathon



Are you looking to set yourself a new challenge for the new year? If so, why not considering running the London Landmarks Half Marathon for British Blind Sport this coming April.

The London Landmarks Half Marathon offers runners a unique opportunity to support British Blind Sport while experiencing the city's most iconic sites such as Big Ben and the Tower of London.

Whether you're an experienced runner or are looking for a new hobby in 2025, your participation in the London Landmarks Half Marathon on behalf of British Blind Sport can positively change lives.

If your application is successful, you will receive:

- A BBS running vest
- Lots of support from the BBS Fundraising team
- Regular e-newsletter with training and fundraising tips and more

To be eligible to run for British Blind Sport, runners are asked to raise £350 to support our work.

Registration is now open. To apply, please complete this form:

www.britishblindsport.wufoo.com/forms/q1e4tg7y0l64ooz/

Activity Finder

The BBS Activity Finder is a valuable resource that connects blind and partially sighted people with a range of adapted sports, inclusive clubs and organisations. By using your postcode, you can find venues, clubs and organisations that are local to you and get involved in a sport or physical activity that suits you.

Getting active has a whole host of benefits including:

- Enhanced mental wellbeing
- Improved physical health
- Increased social connection
- Enhanced independence

BBS is always encouraging new clubs and organisations to add their sessions to the Activity Finder whether that be one-off session or a season of activity. To add new sessions, please visit www.britishblindsport.org.uk for further details on how to get set up.

Reasons to include sessions on the BBS Activity Finder:

- Reach a wider audience and connect with local individuals who are actively looking for sports and physical activity to get involved in
- Increased visibility and awareness of your organisation's inclusivity
- Continuous support from the BBS team if you have any queries in relation to the Activity Finder and adding organisations/sessions.

To access the BBS Activity Finder, please visit:

www.britishblindsport.org.uk/activity-finder



Athlete Spotlight: Chris McDonald



Meet Chris, 37, from Bristol. Chris is part of the Great Britain Para-Cycling Team, but away from his hectic training schedule, travelling, and the pressures of professional cycling, Chris enjoys being a husband, father, and relaxing.

Born with Congenital Cataract, Ocular Hypertension and Nystagmus, Chris said: "Having lived with sight loss since birth, I've just found ways to adapt and cope. For example, when travelling, I need to do a lot of planning, or recce with the support of my wife, or a friend, so I am familiar with where I'm going."

"I don't see a lot of detail and the concentration needed to do simple tasks, such as reading cooking instructions can be time consuming as I need to use magnification aids. Tasks such as food shopping can be challenging - especially when you're asked by your son to buy a specific brand of pasta sauce amongst the hundreds on the shelves! But I'm not shy and will ask for help."

Chris added: "Training for cycling is the biggest hurdle, as I do not have enough vision to ride on the road by myself, so most of my training is completed on a turbo trainer in my garage – a mental game to find the motivation, especially in the summer, when everyone else is riding outside!"

In 2016, Chris attended a British Cycling Talent Identification Day in Derby. He said: "My feedback from the coaches following the day was that I wasn't good enough at that moment in time. I don't like being told no, so I stopped weightlifting and playing football and went to as many spin classes as possible. In addition, I got myself a coach and purchased a bike and a turbo trainer, to be able to progress on my cycling journey. Fast forward 18 months, I attended my second Talent Identification Day, having made the required improvements, and was invited to join the Great Britain Foundation Squad."

"Before cycling, I played partially sighted football for England, until I ruptured my ACL. After my operation, I continued to play in the league but unfortunately, never got back into the national team. I also played cricket for Avon Sports, and in our first season, got to play in the Cup Final at Lords." We asked Chris, what role does sport play in your life, he said: "Sport is everything to me, I have always played a sport and been active, now I make a living doing it."

Fortunately, Chris didn't face too many challenges getting into sport. He said: "I always wanted to play sport and knew fellow visually impaired athletes who played so my path into football and cricket was very easy. However, cycling was a bit trickier. The way I found out about Talent Identification Day's was more by luck rather than me specifically looking to get into the sport. I had no knowledge of competitive cycling before I rode for Great Britain."

As a youngster Chris attended lots of British Blind Sport Have a Go Days. He said: "The events were always brilliant. If I hadn't attended, I would never have tried sport."

Chris's biggest achievement to date is winning his first international medal at only his second race. Reflecting on his first selection, Chris said: "To represent Great Britain for the first time was an amazing experience! A very proud moment, but also very nerve wracking, as the pressure to perform is intense. All of my hard work, the sacrifice and commitment up to that point was paying off."

At the Paris 2024 Paralympics, Great Britain finished at the top of the para-cycling medal table. With the focus now on Los Angeles 2028, Chris is committed to the next 4 years and hopes to be selected, achieve his long-term goal.



Latest sector news

Activity Alliance publish new strategy

The Activity Alliance recently published their new strategy alongside research which reveals the social value contribution of disabled people's activity - 150 minutes of activity a week has a social value of £6,200 per person per year.

**activity
alliance**
disability
inclusion
sport

Their new strategy 'We All Belong' has set out some ambitious plans for the coming years including:

- Sports and activities meet disabled people's needs
- Disabled people influence campaigning, policy and decision-making
- Address inequalities by working with others

To read the full strategy and research, please visit the [Activity Alliance website](#).

IBSA Judo Grand Prix success

British Judo finished up their year with a hugely successful IBSA Grand Prix in Kazakhstan in November, securing three medals.



Paralympic judoka, Evan Molloy took home his first-ever Grand Prix gold medal in his new weight category (81kg).

Jack Hodgson won the silver medal with his performance in the +95kg category, while Miles Solomon won his first medal – a bronze – at IBSA level.

Congratulations to all on a promising start to the next Paralympic cycle.



Photo credit: British Judo

IBTA Blind Tennis World Championship

At the end of September, the GB visually impaired tennis team competed at the International Blind Tennis Association (IBTA) World Championship in Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy.

The Championship saw over 130 visually impaired tennis players from 23 countries battle it out to win gold, silver and bronze medals.



The GB team was made up of:

B1 – Naqi Rizy and Yvette Priestley

B2 – Helen Potter

B3 – Neil Barmforth and Andrea Logan

B4 – Ewan Haywood and Rosie Pybus

B2 player, Dan Hopkins, was also selected but unfortunately had to withdraw due to ill health.

Assistant Coach, Frankie Rohan, said following the Championship: "To assist Head Coach, Louise Assioun, was a pleasure and an honour to represent Great Britain and get the chance to observe such fantastic tennis. The standard continues to improve every year.

Ewan and Neil gained bronze medals in the men's doubles category, whilst Andrea and Neil narrowly missed out on a bronze medal in their singles category.

The Australians dominated in the partially sighted finals, whilst Japan and Argentina battled it out in the finals of both the women's and men's matches, with Argentina coming out on top.

It is always amazing to witness the standard of tennis at these tournaments and the improvement that is clear, every year.

The team did themselves proud all week, and the level of comradery is forever at the forefront of the tournaments we attend. For now, it's back to training, preparing for next years' challenges."

Apply now to join British Cycling's Para-cycling Talent Development Programme

British Cycling are looking to recruit the next generation of para-cyclists with an ambition to compete in the 2028 and 2032 Paralympic Games to join their Para-cycling Talent Development Programme.



The Paralympic Talent Development Programme has been created to be the bridge between open disability cycling and the Great Britain Cycling Team and aims to cultivate an inclusive and diverse training environment that maximises opportunities for talented athletes to progress into the Great Britain Cycling Team Pathway.

Applications are now open for individuals aged 14 and over.

Potential candidates will be invited to a classification and talent identification assessment event on the 8th and 9th March 2025 at the National Cycling Centre in Manchester.

For more information on the Para-cycling Talent Development Programme and to apply, please visit the [British Cycling website](#). Applications close on 1st February 2025.

Discover your Paralympic Potential Day

After a successful start to the Paralympic Potential Days in Crawley, Manchester and Sheffield, the next instalment will take place in at the Greenbank Sports Academy in Liverpool.

Event details

Date: Sunday 2nd February 2025

Time: 10am-3pm

What can a potential Paralympian expect from the event:

- A small group session coached by experienced instructors
- Information about the sport
- An insight into classification
- How to continue and progress

For more information and to sign up for your space, please visit the [ParalympicsGB website](#).



ParalympicsGB



**Paralympic
Potential**



Selection for Goalball UK's Performance Pathway Programme 2024-25

Goalball UK have announced the athletes who will join their Performance Pathway Programme 2024-2025. This Programme offers athletes comprehensive support for 12 months, aiming to enhance athlete performance.



Congratulations to all those who have been selected!

High Performance Athletes

- Caleb Nanevie
- Dan Roper
- Joe Roper
- Lois Turner
- Matthew Loftus

Performance Potential Athletes

- David Scott
- Chelsea Hudson
- Conall Moore
- Jack Peters
- Kali Holder
- Alexandra Ulysses

Talent Athletes

- Freya Gavin
- Harry Boden
- Jacob Hare
- Leo Stubbs
- Paddy Harmer

Wildcard Athletes

- Jalal Ariyanpour
- Josh McEntee

Academy Athletes

- Keira Mills
- Max Dyble
- Daniel White
- Emily Ramsden
- Arun Rai
- Eilidh Johnstone
- Alex Bull
- Alleah Beard-Pace
- Jacob Evans
- Catrin Young
- Gareth Mainwaring
- Daniel Longmore
- Faith Stubbs
- Daniel Jenkins
- Hannah Bennett
- Ben Tall
- Imogen Dodds
- Nikhil Kamath

The first major Goalball event in the upcoming LA 2028 Paralympic Cycle for both men and women will be at the IBSA European Championships in Lahti, Finland from 6th September to 6th October 2025.

Where to find us



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To find out more about British Blind Sport:

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