



Information for parents and carers

What is Paintball?

Paintball is a safe, fun sport in which players of all ages and sizes can play equally well. It's a great recreational activity, and an excellent one for families to participate in together, playing a variety of games. One of the most popular involves equally matched teams who attempt to capture the other team's flag and return it to their own starting point. Another involves intense team work, leading to the natural bonding that comes with being a 'band of brothers'

Players "tag" each other out with paintballs, which are gelatine capsules filled with a paint-like liquid, that are fired from a specially designed rifle or 'marker'. The capsule breaks when it hits a player, leaving a coloured splash which signals that the player is out for a specified period of time

Each player wears a protective helmet or mask which protects the face, eyes and ears from the paint. Games generally last 10-20 minutes, at which point the players get a chance to take a break, refill on water and paint, enthuse about the last game, and regroup for the next one

Is Paintball safe?

Paintball is safer than football, rugby, and basketball; and injuries incurred during paintball games are just 20% of those from fishing, bowling, golf and tennis

The main reason that paintball is so safe is that there is no person-to-person contact. There is no tackling like in rugby; and no kicking and rotational leg movement which leads to so many knee and other injuries in football. The most common paintball-related injuries are strains and sprains associated with moving through the woods

The only way a paintball can injure you is if hits you in the eye or, to a lesser extent, the ear; which is why all players wear protective gear to prevent this from happening. You wouldn't play cricket without pads, nor go cycling without a helmet, so you don't play paintball unless you're wearing a special helmet or goggles designed for that purpose

Since it was first played in 1981, there has never been a fatal paintball injury; and no player who was wearing paintball goggles has ever sustained an eye injury. We have one main rule, which is that helmets and masks stay on at all times; unless specifically told that it is okay to remove them by the organiser

Who can play?

You must be at least 12 on the day of participating; and there is no wheelchair access to the playing area. Other than these exceptions, almost anyone can play

Every player is asked to sign that they have read and understood the rules, which can be downloaded or emailed out in advance, and brought with them on the day. For 12-16 year olds, one of their parents must sign that they have also read and understood them

What is a paintball made out of?

A paintball shell is water-soluble gelatine, the same as capsules for medicines. In fact, some paintball suppliers are pharmaceutical companies. They are filled with a mixture of vegetable dye and soap. Paintballs are non-toxic and biodegradable - you could safely eat them, but they taste gross...

Does it hurt when I'm hit?

Most people compare getting hit by a paintball with getting flicked, or snapped by a towel. You'll know you were hit, but the "flick" will wear off after a few seconds. You may have a pink mark where you were hit, for a few days afterwards. Or a bruise (a proud battle scar ;-)) if you were shot at close range...

Can I play, too?

One of the great things about paintball is everyone can compete equally, regardless of age or physical size. The 180 lb dad, the 130 lb mum and 110 lb teenager can all compete on the same level, allowing you to participate with your children. You don't have to be supremely fit, and you don't need to run; so have some fun with your kids!

Can I watch?

Yes, within limitations, but without cost. The games are played in a remote area, away from the public; so you'll need to register your request to watch, and accompany the group to the playing area

The number of observers allowed will depend upon how many spare helmets and masks are available, after all the players have been issued equipment

Once the games have started, everyone, including observers, must wear a helmet or mask (for spectacle wearers); which must stay on until permission is given to remove it, just like the players. You must also follow any safety instructions from a marshal

You may watch from the Safe Zone, which is behind safety netting, but which still offers a great view of part of the Battle Zone. Face protection must still be worn in the Safe Zone during a game

Alternatively, you can watch from within the Battle Zone itself; in which case you'll be issued with a fluorescent vest, to let players know that you're a neutral observer - although this will not guarantee that you won't get hit! ☺ If you do this, please stay neutral, and don't give away the positions of any hidden players

What should my child wear?

Camouflage overalls are supplied, and any paint that gets through washes out very easily. Dirt and sweat, however, is another matter, so your child should wear something they don't mind getting dirty. Camouflage clothing is not necessary

As with most things, wear layers - it may be cool in the morning and warm up later. We recommend that players cover as much of their body as possible with at least one layer of clothing, as getting hit by a paintball on bare skin can sting; but that layer of clothing also protects you against insects, nettles, thorns, etc. A sturdy pair of shoes is also necessary.

Most players do well with a pair of jeans, a long sleeve t-shirt (with more shirts layered if necessary) and a pair of trainers or hiking boots

Bringing water is also a good idea, although it will be made available in the Safe Zone, and can only be drunk there

How much does it cost?

Usually £10 per session, per player; plus £5 for every 100 rounds of ammunition (*although we often give reductions at special events*). A session is between three and eight hours, depending on the occasion. Everyone will need to start with at least 100 rounds of ammo, and extra pots of 100 rounds are available between games. Swapping ammo within a team is allowed, but experienced players will want to stock up on more ammo at the beginning, to avoid running out during a game

How is 'Crossfire' different to other paintball clubs?

1. We've gone beyond the basic safety requirements, and provide British Standard helmets that give full head protection, instead of the standard goggles or face mask. The helmets we use offer additional top of head protection from overhanging branches, while still allowing easy breathing. However, helmets cannot be worn easily by anyone with spectacles, so we have standard face masks for them instead

2. We provide neck protectors, should a paintball hit the sensitive area of the neck. We also provide padded fingerless gloves to protect the exposed back of the hands

3. The overalls we supply are the latest 'temperate zone' digi-camo; which is far more effective at concealment in the woods than traditional camo

4. We use military simulation markers, commissioned by the US Army for training, and based upon the Colt M4 Commando. We are probably the only club in the UK using this equipment at present. You can see them on

http://www.tippmann.com/emea/product_guide/markerDetails.aspx?productId=117

And the originals on <http://www.colt.com/mil/M4Com.asp>

5. Far from using old and second hand equipment that has seen better days, all of our gear has been bought brand new, and is serviced after every session. Over four beta tests, involving over 60 participants, all issues regarding equipment (like masks steaming up), operations and safety procedures have been addressed and resolved

6. We are cheaper than any paintball club in the country. Our prices are geared to the individual player's requirements, and include choices dependent upon the player's budget. I.e. you can buy a lunch, or bring your own. You can (very carefully) shoot a minimum hundred rounds in a session, or buy extra as needed. This makes it possible to participate in a 2-3 hour session for just £15 or less. However, most players get through more ammo than this

7. All our staff are voluntary. Teenagers are trained as marshals, to give them experience of leadership. All profits go to buy more equipment, or to help other youth activities

For any other questions, please contact me on m.stout@virgin.net or 07889 094991

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