

The Kickball™





Congratulations.

You have just purchased the world's most unique and innovative low-frequency dynamic microphone — *the Kickball*." Here at Blue, we're known for designing and building the finest microphones available for studio, stage, film and broadcast use. Our microphones unite the heritage of the world's most respected classics with leading-edge technology, innovative engineering and inimitable styling. The Kickball is the product of our unrestrained imagination and our years of microphone manufacturing experience. There is simply nothing else like it. But don't just take our word for it — read what audiophiles around the world have been saying:

*"I've kicked more homeruns on the playground with this thing
than any other microphone I've ever kicked"*

— Lefty Foote, MVP, 2004 World Series of Kickball; member, Kickball Hall of Fame

"Finally, my kick drum sounds better than any other instrument on stage!"

— Ringo Peterson, drummer, *The Toxic Waste Experience*

*"Thanks to the Kickball, I was a real standout at the
Battle of Basses 2004 at the Hollywood Bowl."*

— Betty Bottom, Honorable Mention, *Battle of Basses 2004*

"My tympani has never sounded better!"

— Timmy Schuster, 3rd chair tympanist,
Benjamin Franklin Middle School, Park Rapids, MN



We know you hate to read manuals. So do we! But because the Kickball is such a unique recording and sound-reinforcement tool, we really hope you take the time to familiarize yourself with its features. And be sure to try the suggested application tips that are designed to help you get the most out of the Kickball. You might just learn something too. With proper care and feeding, the Kickball will reward you with many years of recording and performance enjoyment. Now, let's kick it, shall we?

Phantom-powered what?

The Kickball is the world's second phantom-powered dynamic microphone. No, that is *not* a typo! Remember the Ball? You probably already know that as an electromagnetic transducer, the traditional dynamic mic induces its own output voltage and does not require phantom power (pay attention — there will be a test on this at the end of class). While this principal has been used for years in everything from guitar pickups to generators, and of course microphones, it exhibits some problems when it comes to accurate sound reproduction.

When you connect your dynamic microphone to a fixed-impedance console input or outboard mic preamp, you create a resistive load in the transducer that varies with frequency. That would be fine if you wanted a tone control on your microphone, but in a recent very unscientific poll conducted by the AAK (Association of Arcane Knowledge), most respondents indicated that they did not want such a device — particularly one over which they had no control! Being the creative thinkers that we are, we solved this problem to give you the finest dynamic microphone ever made. But how?

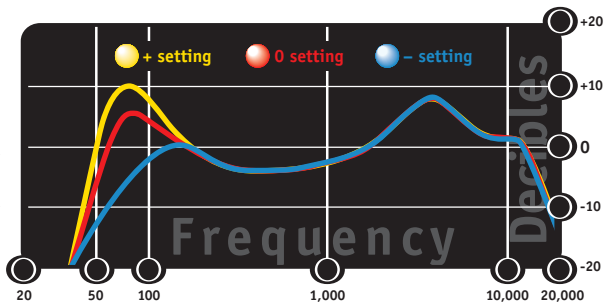
Blue engineers updated the design of our acclaimed Ball microphone, which eliminates *frequency-dependent variable resistance* in a dynamic, and tuned it specifically for use on low frequency instruments like kick drums and bass guitars.

The Kickball delivers an acoustic balance far superior to conventional dynamic microphones. It is punchy and detailed with a larger-than-life sound, particularly at low frequencies, yielding an extremely smooth performance that pleases even the most discerning listener. Like any good kick



Kickball Frequency Response

This frequency chart is only a start. It gives the recordist a basis of the sound provided. How the microphone reacts in a particular application will differ greatly because of many variables. Room acoustics, distance from sound source (proximity), tuning of the instrument and mic cabling are only a few of the interacting issues. For an artist or an engineer, how the microphones are used creates the basis of the sound.



drum microphone, the Kickball can withstand extremely high sound pressure levels that would send even the toughest condensers back to the showers. Plus, it looks really, really cool.

Ok, so how do I use the Kickball?

The Kickball was designed for both stage and studio use. Because of its rugged construction, cardioid pickup pattern and high-spl specification, you can use the Kickball on virtually any instrument: kick drum, snare drum, tom toms, electric bass, bass cabinets, and anywhere else you need a rugged mic that sounds unlike anything you've ever heard before.

The Kickball features a unique swivel mount located on the bottom center of the mic body. Be sure to mount the Kickball on a standard-thread counter-weighted mic stand. Though the Kickball is extremely durable, we would hate to see it fall due to an inadequate stand (it doesn't bounce well). Once mounted, you can gently pivot the Kickball back and forth for optimum positioning in front of the sound source. For added isolation from low frequency-induced rumble, we recommend *The Ringer* universal shockmount, available from your Blue dealer.





HEADS UP!: Forceful positioning of the swivel mount can result in damage not covered by the warranty, so there.

The Kickball requires +48 volt phantom power which most FOH consoles, recording consoles and outboard mic preamps supply. If your preamp does not have a phantom power facility, several external power units are available from various manufacturers. It is important to note that some units, though rated at +48 volts, may supply insufficient or unstable power which can result in distortion or degraded performance when used with the Kickball.

To avoid damage to audio components when connecting phantom power, always follow this simple procedure:

1. Set mic preamp gain to its nominal position (“off”).
2. Mute console master, stage monitor and mains feeds, headphones or foldback sends, and studio monitors.
3. Connect the female end of your balanced XLR microphone cable to the Kickball’s output jack located on the back of the mic body directly opposite the Blue logo. Connect the male end to your balanced console input or balanced mic preamp input.
4. Switch on phantom power.
5. Un-mute all previously muted signal paths and adjust mic preamp gain as necessary.

To disconnect or reroute the Kickball, be sure to mute all audio signal paths before you disengage phantom power. Wait 30 seconds to allow all components in the signal path to discharge before disconnecting the mic.

Once the Kickball is on the stand and powered up, make sure that the active, on-axis side of the diaphragm (the side with the Blue logo) is facing the desired source, unless you’re recording your Aunt Hildy’s kazoo recital, in which case turn the logo away and cover your ears.



Great, so now I'm ready to go! How do I get the most out of my Kickball?

The following application hints are intended to give you a good starting point to get the most out of this unique audio tool both in the studio and on stage. As with all applications however, there are no rules, only guidelines. Trust your gear and trust your ears. If it *sounds* good, it is good!

On Stage



These mic placement recommendations apply to the studio as well as the stage but with one caveat. Due to the lack of acoustic isolation in the live environment, it is generally desirable to employ “close-miking” techniques to achieve better separation between instruments and to avoid monitor bleed, which can cause feedback problems. However, you may want to experiment with The Kickball on stage as well. Due to its anti-resonant ABS shell and spherical shape, The Kickball exhibits excellent off-axis rejection and feedback suppression characteristics, opening up a whole new world of sound reinforcement miking possibilities.



The Kickball utilizes a bass frequency switch allowing three distinct low-frequency equalization curves. The switch is located directly above the Kickball's XLR output jack. This circuit is based on a unique active RC filter that attenuates sub-bass (below 20Hz) frequencies and contours the low end without any noticeable phase distortion. Begin with the switch in the center position. If less bass is required, move the switch to the left (minus); if more bass is required, move the switch to the right (plus). We recommend experimenting with these bass settings to find your ideal sound.

Kick Drum, Floor Tom, Tympani, Large Percussion Instruments

The Kickball's high SPL capability and excellent transient response offer numerous advantages when miking drums. Floor toms and tympani in particular benefit from





the Kickball's extended low frequency response. Begin by placing the microphone two to four inches above the rim or hoop (where the head is secured to the shell). Angle the mic toward the player's stick or hand to pick up more attack and definition. Moving the microphone closer to a drum generally increases the low end, shell resonance, and separation from other sound sources, while more distant placement emphasizes the interaction of the drum and the environment, producing a blended, clearer sound.

Electric Bass



Because of its full and solid bottom end, the Kickball is an excellent mic for any bass guitar amp. Position the diaphragm toward the center of the speaker or dust cap to capture more highs, or toward the edge of the speaker cone for a fuller sound with more low end. For overdriven or distorted tones, move the mic towards the outer edge of the speaker cone, or back it away from the amp a foot or more to blend room tone with direct pickup and soften high frequencies.

Acoustic Bass



Large diaphragm mics require careful placement when used on acoustic bass. The Kickball's rich tone is well-suited to this task. For a balanced and natural sound, position the diaphragm facing the neck where it joins the body. Initially, keep the mic as close to the instrument as possible, tilting the diaphragm toward the f-hole on an upright, or soundhole on a dreadnaught-style acoustic to capture a blend of low frequencies finger articulation. If you need more low frequencies, move the Kickball closer to the f-hole or soundhole. For more high frequency detail, move the Kickball farther away from the instrument, either at the same neck position, or above the instrument near the bassist's head.





*While not optimal for
playground use, the Kickball
promises hours of playtime
on stage or in the studio*

The Kickball's in your court

We're sure that you'll be delighted with the results you get from the Kickball, whether it's in the studio or on stage. At Blue we're committed to bringing you the finest in technology and craftsmanship, along with an attention to detail that runs throughout our entire line of award-winning mics.

Now, go get the Kickball connected and be ready to hear how well-rounded it really is. It'll even make cousin Lenny sound good.





Specifications:

Acoustical Operating Principal:
Dynamic transducer with active Class A
phantom-powered solid state circuitry

Polar Pattern: Cardioid

Frequency Range: 35Hz – 16kHz

Sensitivity: 3.0mV/Pa at 1 kHz; 1Pa = 94dB SPL

Rated Impedance: 50 Ω

Rated Load Impedance: 2k Ω

Maximum SPL: 162 dB SPL (2k Ω load at 1% THD)

Output Noise Level: 18dB-A

Power Requirement: +48V DC phantom-power

Power Consumption: 2.5 mA

Optional Accessories: *Cranberry* or *Kiwi* high definition mic cable
The Ringer — Custom shockmount for Blue's entire line of spherical mics



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5706 Corsa Avenue, Suite 102
Westlake Village, CA 91362

www.bluemic.com

In keeping with our policy of continued product improvement,
Baltic Latvian Universal Electronics (BLUE) reserves the right
to alter specifications without prior notice.

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Optimum inflation pressure for the Kickball is 32psi.

Made in Latvia.



Microphones

Step up to the mic.™