

BOCCE STANDARDS ASSOCIATION STANDARD COURT BOCCE RULES FOR LEAGUES & TOURNAMENTS

TEAMS:

- 1. A team on the court has 4 players maximum (2 stationed at each end of the court) with each player throwing 2 balls. Players are not allowed to switch ends during a game. A team may have one or more substitute (alternate) players on the team. (For mixed teams a team on the court consists of 2 women maximum and 2 men maximum at all times.)**
- 2. A team may play a match if only 2 or 3 players are present, however, no player is permitted to throw more than 2 balls (a penalty of 2 balls per missing player). A team without at least two players present at the scheduled game start time forfeits the game with zero points and the opponent is awarded 12 points.**
- 3. A team must have one player designated as the team captain. The team captain participates in the coin toss and assigns players to their position on the court for the match. The team captain may designate a player as an "end captain" for the end opposite that of the captain. Only the team captain or an end captain may go on the court for measurements.**

COIN TOSS:

- 1. Begin the match with the flip of a coin between the captains of each team. The winner of the coin flip has the first toss of the pallino and chooses the color of the team's balls.**
- 2. If playing the same team in the next game, players must switch ends between games and the winning team throws the pallino to start next game (players may be replaced by substitutes, however, a player never plays 2 consecutive games from the same end of the court). If playing a different team, play starts over with the coin toss and players may be reassigned as desired by the captain.**

PALLINO THROW:

- 1. The pallino is the first ball put into play and is thrown underhand from behind the pointing foul line. The pallino may be bounced off the sideboards.**
- 2. The pallino must end up across the center line and at least 12 inches away from the sideboards or backboard without hitting the backboard. If a thrower fails to do this, the throw goes to other team. If the second throw fails to place the pallino into play, the pallino is placed approximately in the center of the hitting foul line at the opposite end of the court in order to speed up play.**
- 3. If a player throws pallino and/or first ball when other team should throw the pallino, the balls are returned and the frame starts over.**
- 4. Once pallino is in play, the pallino can be knocked anywhere on the court except back over the center line or out of the court (frame ends, play resumes at opposite end, and same team throws the pallino).**

BOCCE BALL THROWS:

- 1. The initial pallino thrower always throws the first bocce ball. All balls are thrown underhand. If the first ball hits the backboard without hitting the pallino first, the ball is removed and the team throws again until they have a ball in play.**
- 2. Except for hitting, all bocce balls are thrown from behind the pointing foul line. Any ball released behind the pointing foul line is considered a throw for points. Any ball released beyond the pointing foul line and before the hitting foul line is considered a throw to hit or spock other balls. Foul Line rules apply.**
- 3. Each succeeding ball is thrown by the team that does NOT have the ball closest to the pallino. A team whose ball ties the opponent's closest ball must throw again. The "IN" team only throws if opponents have thrown all 4 balls. Team members can throw in any order.**
- 4. Hitting or spocking is permitted. A player must first inform the official referee (or their opponent if there is no official referee) that they intend to go past the pointing foul line to deliver a "hit" or "spock" (a hard underhand throw directly at the balls on the court and released before crossing the hitting foul line for the purpose of moving the opponent's balls or the pallino.) The thrown ball is removed from play if the pallino or another ball is not hit, even if the ball does not hit the backboard.**
- 5. Balls may be bounced off or played against sideboards.**
- 6. A ball hitting the backboard without first touching the pallino or another bocce ball is a dead ball and is removed from play. Standard Penalties apply.**
- 7. If a player throws wrong color ball, it is replaced with a correct color ball after the ball comes to rest.**
- 8. If a player throws when the other team should throw or throws more than 2 balls, that ball is removed from play. Standard Penalties apply.**
- 9. If a player throws when other team should throw because of a miscall by the Referee, the ball is returned and the correct player throws. Standard Penalty #2 applies.**
- 10. If a team's legally thrown ball is interfered with while moving by someone or something not on the playing surface before the throw, the ball is returned to be thrown again. If possible, any balls moved by the throw are reset to their approximate original position. If balls are sufficiently moved that the approximate original positions can not be determined, the frame is replayed. However, if the interference is caused by a team member, the ball is removed from play and the Standard Penalties apply.**
- 11. If a team's legally thrown ball is moved (accidentally or intentionally) from its resting position by an opposing player or referee before the points are determined and the end of the frame is declared, it is reset to its approximate original position. If the ball is sufficiently moved that the approximate original position can not be determined, the offended team has the option to leave the balls as they lay or replay the frame.**
- 12. If a team's legally thrown ball is moved from its resting position (accidentally or intentionally) by a team member, the ball is removed from play. Standard Penalties apply.**
- 13. The person(s) doing the measuring must press and rotate balls and the pallino before measuring to mark their original position on the court surface. If a ball or pallino is accidentally moved while measuring, it is replaced to its original marked position.**
- 14. A bocce ball, for whatever reason, that goes out of the court is a dead ball and is removed from play for that frame.**
- 15. Volo shooting (lofting the ball in the air beyond the center line of the court) is not permitted.**

FOUL LINES:

- 1. Pointing and Hitting foul lines must be clearly marked across the playing surface for foul line violations to be officially called and penalties applied.**
- 2. Players may step on but not over the proper foul line before releasing the pallino or a bocce ball. (Toe of foot can not exceed the width of the foul line mark.)**
- 3. If a player's toe exceeds the width of the proper foul line before releasing a ball (bocce or pallino), they will receive one warning. Subsequent fouls will result in nullifying the pallino throw or removal of the thrown bocce ball from play. Standard Penalties apply.**

STANDARD PENALTIES:

- 1. For the violation of any rule that requires the removal of a bocce ball from play, that ball is immediately removed from play until that frame has been completed. The violation must be called and the ball removed before the next ball is thrown. If the ball is not removed before the next ball is played, the ball remains in play for the rest of the frame.**
- 2. If possible, any balls moved because of the action of the violation ball are reset to their approximate original position. If balls are sufficiently moved that the approximate original positions can not be determined, the opposing team has the option to leave the balls as they lay or replay the frame.**

SCORING:

- 1. The official score for frame is determined after all 8 balls have been played and measured to the captains' satisfaction. One point is awarded for each ball of a team that is closer to the pallino than the opponent's closest ball (1 to 4 points).**
- 2. The team that scores in the last frame throws the pallino in the next frame and play continues as above.**
- 3. If each team's closest balls are tied, no score is made and play continues at the opposite end with the team scoring the point(s) in the previous frame delivering the pallino.**
- 4. The team that first scores 12 points, wins the game.**
- 5. Matches are determined by the league or tournament and may be by games won, 2 out of 3 games, 3 out of 5 games, etc. A typical match is 3 games.**

SUBSTITUTION:

- 1. It is the responsibility of each team player to obtain a substitute and notify the Team Captain if they can not play a scheduled game.**
- 2. Substitutes must be extra players on the team or on the League Substitute Roster. A team player who is playing a scheduled game that week may not substitute on another team. (Optional: Team players that are not scheduled to play that week may be used for substitutes if the roster substitutes are not available).**
- 3. Substitutions may only be made between games or between frames. A late arriving missing player or substitute may enter the game in a vacant position at any time between frames.**
- 4. A team with 4 players on the court may make up to four substitutions between games but only one substitution during a game. A player replaced during a game cannot reenter that game or the next game.**

TEAM CAPTAINS:

- 1. The team captain participates in the coin toss and assigns players to their position on the court.**
- 2. The team captain may designate a player as an "end captain" for the end opposite that of the captain.**
- 3. Only the team captain or an end captain may go on the court for measurements. A captain may observe and call for measurements to determine the official score for a frame.**
- 4. A captain may approach and observe the positions of balls in play. A captain after observing the balls, must return behind the pointing foul line and may only use hand signals to instruct partners at opposite end of court.**
- 5. Only the captain or a designated player from each team (a total of two players) shall return balls for the next frame after points have been determined.**
- 6. The team captain is responsible for assuring that the team's points are posted correctly and for reporting final game scores to the record keeper.**

TEAM PLAYERS:

- 1. Players must remain behind the hitting foul line at all times except the thrower may go out to the center line just prior to throwing to observe the position of balls on the court.**
- 2. Players may request an "IN" count or a measurement at any time. An "IN" count is not official until all 8 balls have been played and necessary measurements made.**
- 3. Players may converse with one another but only with players on their end of the court. Only hand signals may be used with players at the opposite end of the court.**
- 4. Players shall not talk to or interfere with a thrower on the court prior to the release of the ball. When the thrower is on the court, all other players must be off the court and remain behind the backboard.**
- 5. No player may go up to the balls and instruct a team player how or where to throw the ball.**
- 6. Player practice after the game start time is limited to one complete frame in each direction.**
- 7. To preserve the condition of the clay court, players shall minimize walking on the court and not wear ripple or spiked sole shoes.**

OFFICIAL REFEREES :

- 1. Referees shall be qualified bocce experts and fully knowledgeable of the league/tournament rules.**
- 2. Referees shall have a copy and enforce all game rules.**
- 3. All "IN" determinations and measurements are made by the Referee. (Measurements may be made with any device that reliably and repeatably indicates the difference between the measurements.)**
- 4. The referee determines the points for each frame and reports the point score to scorekeepers.**
- 5. The referee shall not give advice to either team or coach players as to where to direct their throw.**
- 6. The referee has the final word in disputes and must document any formal objections/protests for future action by the club/league/tournament committee. Formal objections/protests must be made by the team captain before the next ball is played.**

7. A referee for valid reasons may allow a time-out up to 10 minutes maximum.
8. The official referee has the option, after one or more warnings to the player and team captain, to eject a player for continued rule violations, arguing, or disrupting play.

TEAM PLAY WITHOUT OFFICIAL REFEREES:

1. Team Captain assigns team members to each end of court. Team Captain appoints one of the team members at the opposite end of the court to be the 'End Captain' for that end. The Team Captain is the 'End Captain' for their end of the court.
2. The End Captain determines who throws and in what order for the team members on their end of the court.
3. The End Captain of each team at the non-throwing end of the court stand at the side of the court near the pallino and serve as the referees (Official Referee rules apply). If they agree on the 'IN' color they notify the other end of which color should throw. If they disagree, they measure and then notify the other end of which color should throw. The same procedure applies to determining the point count. The End Captains report the point score to scorekeepers.
4. The End Captains are the only 2 people allowed on the court to make measurements, determine points, and return balls. All other players must remain behind the end backboards at these times.
5. The End Captains refereeing can not verbally coach their team members on the throwing end, however, they can give hand signals but only from the side of the court. They can respond on the court to a thrower's question as to which balls are 'IN'.

LOCAL RULES

1. Due to specific local conditions, a club, league, or tournament may add additional local environmental rules relative to safety, behaviors, equipment use, court grooming, noise, footwear, dress, uniforms, etc.
2. Due to specific local conditions, a league or tournament may add additional local operational rules relative to officials, protests, non-playing captains/coaches, spectators, records, scorecards, tie-breakers, missing players, substitutions, breaks/time-outs, weather delays, delay-of-game, etc.

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