

# Official Rules & Regulations For Competitive Bocce

A Comprehensive Set of Open Rules



America's First Palace of Bocce<sup>SM</sup>

1

## USBF Bocce Open Rules

### Bocce Teams

Teams will be comprised of four players. Two players from each team will be permanently stationed at each end of the court, throwing two bocce balls each. At the end of each frame, the game resumes at the opposite end of the court.



Begin the match with the flip of a coin between the captains of each team. The winner of the coin flip may have the first toss of the pallino (small target ball), or choose the color of the bocce balls.

2

## History of Bocce

### History of Bocce

Throwing balls toward a target is probably the oldest game known to mankind. As early as 5200 B.C. the Egyptians played a form of bocce with polished rocks.

The early Romans were among the first to play a game resembling what we know as bocce today. From the early Greek physician Ipcrates to the great Italian Renaissance man Galileo, the early participants of bocce have noted that the game's athleticism and spirit of competition rejuvenates the body.

According to legend, Sir Francis Drake refused to set out to defend England against the Spanish Armada until he finished a game. He proclaimed, "First we finish the game, then we'll deal with the Armada!".

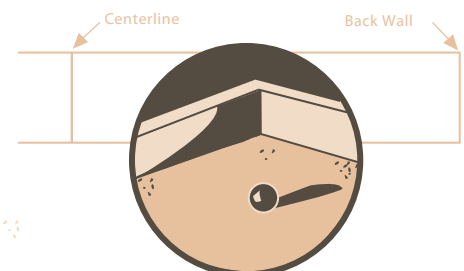
Thanks to many Italian immigrants at the turn of the century, bocce has come to flourish in the United States. So, cheers to bocce. Throw out a pallino and become part of the long heritage of the game from great thinkers such as Galileo and Da Vinci, to the noble Sir Francis Drake and even America's own George Washington. Enjoy the world's oldest sport, a sport known to revive the body and mind.

3

## Tossing the Pallino

### Tossing the Pallino

The play of the pallino is legal if it passes the center line of the court, is at least 3 feet off the back board and at least a foot from the side wall. If a player fails to toss the pallino properly, the opposing team will toss the pallino and put it into play. If the opposing team fails to properly toss the pallino, the pallino reverts back to the original team. Any time a player is rolling, opposing players must remain outside the court.



4

# Starting the Game

## Starting the Game

The first ball will be thrown by the team that originally tossed the pallino. If that bocce ball hits the back board, the ball is removed from the court and the team must roll again until they have a ball in play. The other team throws until it beats (not ties) the opposing ball. This continues until both teams have used all their balls. Whenever a team gets a ball closer, it steps aside and lets the other team roll.

The team that scored last throws the pallino to begin the next frame. Consecutive or alternating throws by teammates shall be at the option of the players. Players may use the side walls at any time. If a player rolls the wrong color bocce ball, simply replace it with the correct color when it comes to rest.

If a player rolls out of turn or plays more than two balls, the other team may leave all balls as is or remove the illegal ball from the play and return all bocce balls to their approximate position.

6

# Fencing Back Wall

## Bocce Balls Hitting the Back Board

A ball hitting the back board without hitting any other ball first is dead and must be removed from play. If it hits a ball and then the back board, all bocce balls are valid. If a thrown bocce ball does not first touch another ball and hits the back board and then strikes a stationary ball, that stationary ball shall be replaced to its approximate position. The thrown ball is removed from play.

## Balls Leaving the Court

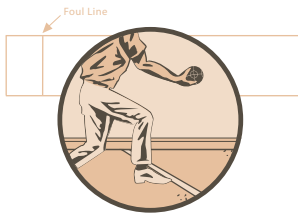
If a bocce ball leaves the court, hits the fencing and falls back into the court it is dead and should be removed from play. All objects touched by the ball after re-entering the court should be replaced. If the pallino leaves the court, hits the fencing or rolls back past half court, the frame is restarted.

5

# Foul Lines Scoring

## Foul Lines

Players may step on but not over the foul line before releasing the pallino or their bocce ball.



## Bocce Scoring

Only one team scores in a frame. One point is given for each ball that is closer to the pallino than the closest bocce ball of the opposing team. If at the end of any frame the closest bocce ball of each team is at equal distance from the pallino, the ball that was thrown first gets the point. Games are normally played to 12 or 15 points. The tournament host may change this number.

7

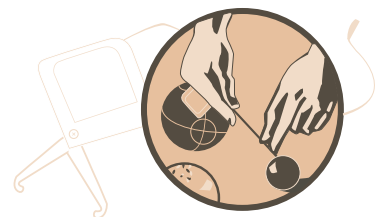
# Measuring Pallino

## Pallino Hitting the Back Board

Once the pallino is in play, it remains in play even if it hits the back board during the game. However, if the pallino is knocked out of the court, or is knocked in front of the centerline, the frame will end and play will resume from the opposite end of the court, with the same team tossing the pallino.

## Measuring & Disputes

Team captains may measure any bocce balls at any time. All disputes will be resolved by the tournament host.



## Late Arrivals & Substitutions

A team not showing within ten minutes of the scheduled starting time, loses two points, and an additional two points for each five minute increment thereafter. A team not showing up within thirty minutes of the scheduled starting time forfeits the game.

A team missing players at the start of the game may play, however, each player may only roll two bocce balls. (A player arriving late may enter a game, but only after the completion of the game.) A team may make one substitution per game. Substitutions may only be made between frames.



## Bocce Glossary

**Bocce** - The name of the game and also the name of the ball the teams try to get close to the pallino.

**Pallino** - The small ball that is used as the target. Sometimes referred to as the jack or pauline.

**Punta** - A point shot where a person rolls their bocce to get close to the pallino.

**Raffa** - Also known as a spock or hit. It is where a player attempts to knock either a bocce or the pallino out of position by throwing a ball hard at the target.

**Volo** - Used mainly in international rules. A shot where the player attempts to hit the target ball without contacting the ground first.

**Open Rules** - A common version of the game where the only disallowed shot is when a bocce touches the back wall without touching any other balls on the playing surface.

**International Rules** - A more complicated form of bocce where shots must be called and stricter rules governing play are in effect. These rules are used in the national and world championships.

**Rule of Advantage** - When an illegal play is called the other team can decide whether to let the ball stay as it lies or put everything back to the way it was before the illegal shot took place.

**Brass Balls** - A variation of bocce that uses hollow brass balls.

**CBI** - (Confederazione de Bocce Internacinal) This is a major governing body of bocce worldwide. They run the world championships of bocce.

**USBF** - (United States Bocce Federation) This is the major governing body of bocce in the U.S. They run the national championships of bocce.

## Court Dimensions

				E'	D'	C'	B'	A'
13'	10'	6.5'	14'	14'	6.5'	10'	13'	
4m	3m	2m	4.25m	4.25m	2m	3m	4m	
A	B	C	D	E				

A & A' - The back walls of the court.

B & B' - The foul line for point (punta) shots and hitting (raffa)

C & C' - Not used for open rules. In international rules it is the foul line for hitting a volo shot.

D & D' - The furthest a person can walk after a point shot. In international rules a raffa shot must not hit the ground before this line.

E & E' - The midpoint of the court and the furthest a person can run after a hit.

### Special Circumstances

Valid pallino toss - must be between E and B' (or E' and B if coming from the other direction.)

Volo shots - In international rules a ball between E and D' (or E' and D) must be hit in the volo style only.



America's First Palace of Bocce™

Palazzo di Bocce, Inc.  
4291 S. Lapeer Road • Orion, MI 48359  
248.371.9987 • fax: 248.371.9986  
www.palazzodibocce.com  
© All Rights Reserved

# R

emember, you don't have to be  
Italian to play!