

### How Do You Construct A Court?

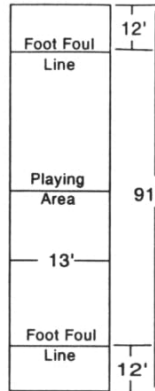
A level surface 91' long and 13' wide with side and back walls accommodates all styles of play, including the "Open Rules" and both recognized international disciplines. If you are planning to build a personal court for recreational use for you, your family, and friends, then the size should be whatever fits in your backyard. We recommend the internationally approved 91' x 13' because it provides the most flexibility. Your court will then be regulation size, regardless of the style of game you play.

Sidewalls and a backboard are desirable. Walls can be made of concrete with wood facing to provide maximum resilience. Walls can also be constructed entirely of wood.

The court surface should be relatively smooth and level. A hard packed surface can be achieved with a mixture of clay and oyster shell flour, limestone, or decomposed granite dust. Synthetic surfaces are being developed which minimize maintenance. Carpet may also be used.

And, if you do not have a court, just play anywhere. Grass, sand, dirt... you will still have fun!

For more information on international rules and regulation court construction, contact the United States Bocce Federation, 2012 Howard Avenue, San Carlos, CA 94070 or Bocce Sport USA, 920 Harbor View Drive, Martinez, CA 94553, Telephone: 925-229-2157, Fax: 925-370-6986, Email: [usbocce@pacbell.net](mailto:usbocce@pacbell.net)



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## UNITED STATES BOCCE FEDERATION OFFICIAL OPEN REGULATIONS

### BOCCE – THE EVOLUTION OF THE RULES

Over the centuries there have been almost as many variations to the rules as there have been courts. People have played banking off the sidewall; some say if your ball touches either wall it is out of play; some don't have walls.

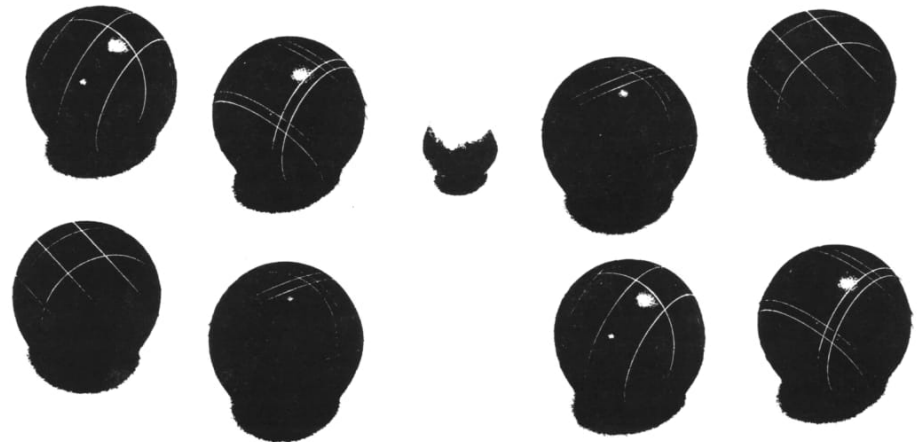
The fact of the matter is they are all variations of one of the oldest games in history. Although ancient Egyptian artifacts dating back to 3500-4000 BC depict a game very close to Bocce, the sport likely descended from Greek ball-tossing games. Strong evidence of Bocce appears in the tomb paintings and sculptures of the Golden Age of Greece. The Romans were fond of a game very much like modern Bocce. Accounts of the Punic Wars tell of Roman soldiers passing the time between battles pitching rocks at smaller rocks.

Modern Bocce spread through the world from 19th Century Italy. Its earlier spread by the Romans to all corners of their Empire led to the evolution of other similar games, such as lawn bowling, nine-pins, skittles, and petanque. Indeed, the essentially American sport of bowling is said to owe its existence to the classical game of Bocce.

These "Open Rules" are ideal for use at a family picnic, the backyard, or a recreational league. It is an excellent way to expose the sport, promote the game, and draw in new players.

In addition to these "Open Rules", there are two recognized sets of international regulations that are used exclusively in world competitions. Throughout the United States you may still find some minor regional variations of the game, but these variations are disappearing in favor of the standardized official U.S.F.B. "Open Rules" and the international rules.

Bocce is a game of skill and camaraderie. The "Open Rules" provide the participant with an enjoyable social pastime. The international rules are somewhat more complex and require a high degree of skill and finesse. They are for players who want to advance to the next level.



#### UNITED STATES BOCCE FEDERATION

The United States Bocce Federation (U.S.F.B.) is a non-profit charitable corporation organized to promote the sport of Bocce through education and amateur competition. All funds received go directly to this objective. The U.S.F.B. is the only internationally sanctioned governing body for Bocce in the United States and is a member of the United States Amateur Athletic Union, the Federazione Internazionale de Boules, and the Confederazione Boccistica Internazionale.

# "OPEN" BOCCE REGULATIONS

## STARTING THE MATCH

### *Who Goes First?*

The match begins with the toss of a coin between the "capos" or captains of each team. The winner of the coin toss will determine the end from which play will begin and may have the first toss of the jack (the small target ball) or choose the color of the balls.

### *Tossing The Jack*

A player may toss the jack any distance so long as the jack passes the center line of the court and does not hit the backboard. If a player fails to toss the jack properly, the opposing team will toss the jack and put it in play. If the opposing team fails to properly toss the jack, the jack reverts to the original team.

### *How Do You Start?*

When the jack has been properly put into play, the team that originally tossed the jack will roll the first bocce ball trying to get as close as possible to the jack. If that bocce ball hits the backboard without touching the jack, that team must roll again. Otherwise, he/she steps aside and that team does not roll again until the opposing team has either gotten one of its bocce balls closer to the jack or has rolled all of its balls. Whenever a team gets a ball closer, they step aside and let the other team roll. The other team rolls until it beats (not ties) the opposing ball. This continues until both teams have used all their bocce balls. The team who scored last rolls the jack to begin the next frame from the opposite end. Consecutive or alternating rolls by teammates shall be at the option of the players.

Players may use the sidewalls at any time. If a player rolls the wrong color ball, simply replace it with the correct color when it comes to rest. If a player rolls out of turn, the opposing team may leave everything, including the rolled ball exactly where it is or they may return all moved balls to their approximate original positions and remove the rolled ball from play.

### *Where Do You Roll From?*

Players' movements are limited to the foul line. The player may step on, but should not step over, the foul line before releasing the jack or bocce ball. When a player releases the jack or bocce, both feet must be on the court unless that player has a significant physical impairment.

Any time a player is rolling, opposing players should remain outside the court.

## PLAYING THE GAME

### *How Do You Score?*

Only one team scores in a frame. At the end of the frame, one point is given for each ball that is closer to the jack than the closest ball of the opposing team. If at the end of any frame the closest ball of each team is equidistant from the jack, the frame ends in a tie. No points are awarded to either team, and the game resumes from the opposite end of the court with the same team tossing the jack. Games are usually played to 12 or 15 points.

All measurements should be made from the inside dimension of the bocce ball to the inside dimension of the jack.

### *What If A Ball Hits The Backboard?*

A ball that hits the backboard is dead on impact unless it first strikes another ball or the jack, in which case everything is valid. Dead balls should be immediately removed from play until the next frame begins.

If a bocce does not strike another ball or the jack and it hits the backboard, but before it can be removed from play, it rebounds and strikes a stationary ball or the jack, that stationary object shall be placed back in its approximate original position. The rolled ball is dead and removed from play.

### *Can The Jack Hit The Backboard?*

Once the jack has been validly put into play, it remains in play even if it hits the backboard. However, if the jack is knocked out of the court or it is knocked in front of the center line, the frame will end, no points are awarded, and play will resume from the opposite end of the court with the same team tossing the jack.

### *What Is Shooting?*

Shooting is lofting the ball in the air beyond the center of the court. Shooting is allowed, unless the local club prohibits shooting for safety considerations.

## HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN PLAY

### *How Many People Are On A Team?*

Games can be played one-on-one, in pairs, or foursomes. In the "Open Rules", singles are played with each person rolling 4 balls from opposite ends of the court. In pairs or doubles, both players can play 2 balls each from opposite ends of the court, or one person from each team can be stationed at opposite ends of the court rolling all 4 balls from their end. In foursomes, two players each are stationed at opposite ends of the court rolling 2 balls each. At the end of each frame, the game resumes from the opposite end of the court.

### *Tournaments Or League Play*

For tournament or league play, some additional rules are recommended.

- A team not showing within 10 minutes of the scheduled starting time loses two points and two points for each 5 minute increment thereafter. A team not showing up within 30 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 use the number of balls that would be allotted him/her if the full team were present. A player arriving late may enter a game, but only after the completion of the frame.
- A team may make one substitution per game. Substitutions may only be made between frames.

### *Summary*

Bocce is a game for both sexes, all ages, and for people with varying degrees of ability. It can be played by anyone, anywhere. It is an easy game to play, but difficult to play well. These U.S.B.F. standardized "Open Rules" are designed both for fun and competition, and are well suited for backyard events and recreational league play, as well as serious tournament competition.

### *Who Plays Bocce?*

Everyone! There is no race, sex, or age discrimination in the sport of Bocce. It is played in North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. It is part of the International Special Olympics and the Senior Olympics, and has been recognized as a sport by the International Olympic Committee.

### *What Do You Need To Play?*

You need a set of 8 balls, four for each team, and a smaller target ball, commonly referred to as the jack or pallino. It is also helpful to have a measuring device.