

Bocce Rules

Valid through 2025

Special Olympics
New Hampshire



Special Olympics New Hampshire has created this set of rules based on the rules outlined by Special Olympics, Inc. Special Olympics, Inc is the International Governing Body for Bocce.

These rules shall be used to govern all Special Olympics New Hampshire Bocce competition through the end of 2025 when we next review these rules.

Events Offered

- We offer Bocce competition in the following events:
 - Singles (one player per team)
 - Doubles (two players per team)
 - Unified Sports Doubles (two players per team)
 - Team Competition (four players per team)
 - Unified Sports Team (four players per team)

Registration

- Participation is required at an Area Summer Games in order to compete at State Summer Games.
- Teams consist of four competitors.
- Competitors may only compete in one doubles event, either traditional or Unified Sports.
- Competitors may compete in only one team event, either traditional or Unified Sports.
- Unified Sports Doubles teams shall consist of one athlete and one Unified Sports partner.
- Unified Sports Teams shall consist of two athletes and two Unified Sports partners.
- Local Programs may combine to form doubles teams or teams of four.

Divisioning

- Area Games competition for athletes and partners is mandatory.
- For State Games, all competitors (athletes and Unified Sports partners) must compete in a divisioning round.
 - Each athlete and partner should play three modified games, called a set. The athlete should alternate from each end of the court and play the following allotted balls. The athlete should not surpass the foul line when he/she plays the allotted balls:
 - The referee will place the pallina at the marked spot (center) of the 9.15-meter (30-foot) line, and the player should play eight balls. The referee will measure the closest three balls and record their distance in centimeters.
 - The referee will then place the pallina at a marked spot in the center of the court at the 12.20-meter (40-foot) mark, and the player should play eight balls. The referee will measure the closest three balls and record their distance in centimeters.
 - During the divisioning process, if the pallina is moved from its spot at 9.15-meters (30ft), 12.20-meters (40ft) or 15.24-meters (50ft), it is to be replaced on the spot

- before the next ball is rolled and before any measurements are taken.
- Measurements will be taken from the center of the bocce ball to the center of the pallina, for a total of nine measurements, the sum of which becomes the athlete's divisioning score.
- For Doubles and Teams, the sum of the athletes' divisioning scores shall be the Doubles and Team's divisioning score.

Equipment

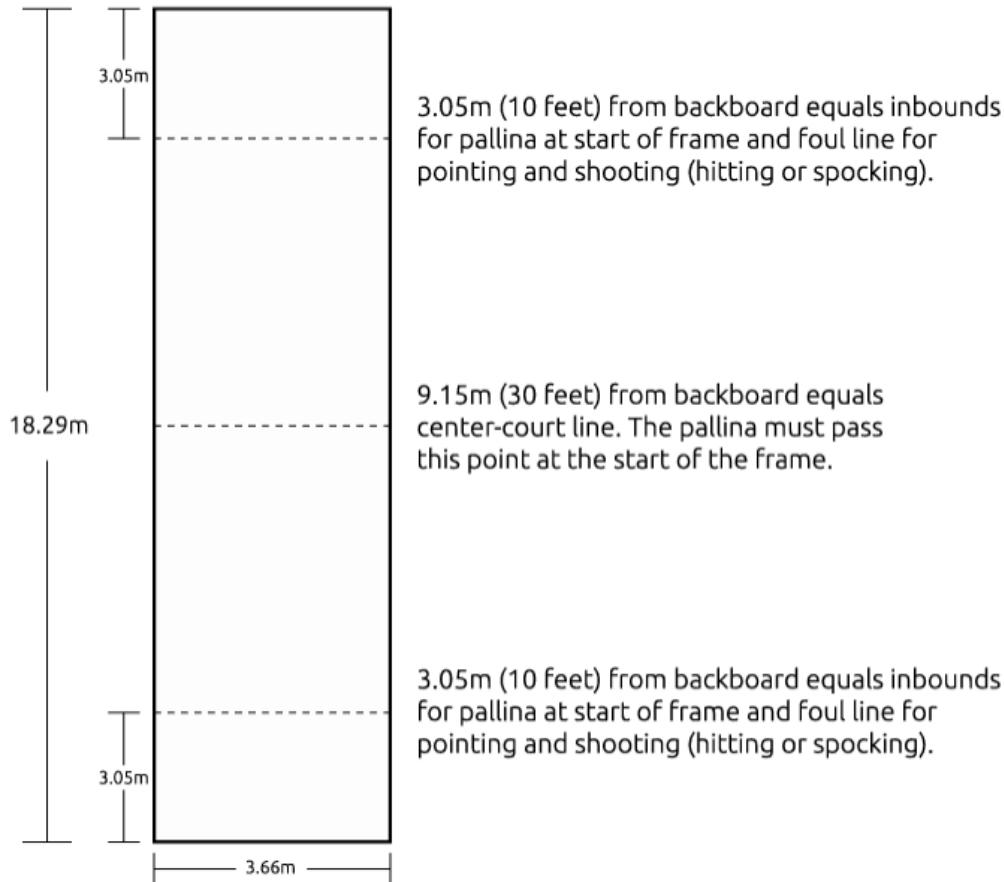
- Uniform
 - Athletes should wear athletic clothing or khakis and a golf shirt.
 - Athletes must wear closed toed shoes.
- Competition will be held on grass or artificial surface.
- Bocce is played with eight balls and one smaller target or object ball called the pallina (jack, cue, beebie, etc.).
- There are four balls to a side or team, and they are generally made in two colors to distinguish the balls of one team from those of the opposing team.
- Bocce balls may be manufactured of wood or a composition material and must be of equal size. Sizes may be from 107 millimeters (4.20 inches) to 110 millimeters (4.33 inches) in diameter.
- The pallina must not be larger than 63 millimeters (2.5 inches) or smaller than 48 millimeters (1.875 inches) in diameter and should be of a color visibly distinct from both teams' bocce ball colors.
- The measuring device may be any device that has the capacity to accurately measure the distance between two objects, such a measuring tape.

Competition

SET UP: COURT LAYOUT

- The court is an area 3.66 meters (12 feet) wide by 18.29 meters (60 feet) long.
- The court surface may be composed of stone dust, dirt, clay, grass or artificial surface, as long as there is no permanent or temporary obstruction in the court that would interfere with the straight-line delivery of a ball from any direction. These obstructions do not include variations in grade, consistency, or terrain.
- The court walls are the side and the end walls of the court and may be composed of any rigid material (gutter pieces cut to length and attached at the ends with right angle pieces are used at Area and State competition). The side and end walls must be, at minimum, as high as the bocce balls. The side or end walls may be utilized during play for bank shots or rebound shots.
- Lines measuring 50 mm (2 inches) in width should be marked on all courts for the following:
 - 1) Foul line for pointing or shooting (hitting)—3.05 meters (10-foot line) from the backboards.
 - 2) Half- court marker — minimum distance pallina is played at the start of the frame. During the course of play, the position of the pallina may change as a result of normal play; however, the pallina may never come to rest closer than the half-point marker, 9.15-meter (30-foot) line, or the frame is considered dead.
 - 3) The 3.05-meter (10-foot) and 9.15-meter (30-foot) lines should be permanently drawn from sideboard to sideboard.

- See image below for more detail on setting up a regulation bocce court:



GENERAL RULES

- Games will be played until the score listed below or for 30 minutes whichever comes first.
 - o Singles – 12 points
 - o Doubles (Traditional or Unified) – 12 points
 - o Team (Traditional or Unified) – 16 points
- There will be a coin toss at the start of the game within the court to determine which end and color.

GAME PROCEDURE

- A coin toss by the referee will determine which team has the pallina and choice of ball color.
- Three Attempt Rule
 - o The team possessing the pallina will have three attempts at placing the pallina beyond the 9.15-meter (30-foot) mark and before the 3.05-meter (10-foot) mark on the opposite end. If these three attempts are unsuccessful, the opposing team will have one opportunity to place the pallina. If this attempt is unsuccessful, the referee will place the pallina in the center of the court at the 15.24-meter (50-foot) mark (opposite end foul line). However, at no time does a team lose its earned pallina advantage of being able to deliver the first ball.
- Sequence of Play
 - o The pallina is rolled or tossed by a member of the team having won the coin toss to start the game. The player rolling the pallina must deliver the first ball. The opposing team will then deliver their bocce balls until the point is taken or they have exhausted their four

balls. This “nearest ball” rule governs the sequence of played balls. The side whose ball is the closest to the pallina is called the “in” ball and the opposing side the “out” ball. Whenever a team gets “in,” it steps aside and allows the “out” team to deliver.

- Initial Point
 - The team with the pallina advantage will establish the initial point. Example: Team A tosses the pallina and delivers the first ball. Team B elects to hit Team A’s ball out of position. In doing so, both balls, Team A’s and Team B’s, fly out of the court, leaving only the pallina in the court. It is then on Team A to re-establish the initial point.
- Ball Delivery
 - A team has the option of rolling, tossing, bouncing, banking, etc., its ball down the court, provided it does not go out of bounds, or the player does not violate the foul markers. A player also has the option of hitting out any ball in play in trying to obtain a point or decrease the opposing team’s points. A player can grip the ball by placing his/her hand over or under the ball as long as the ball is released in an underhand delivery. An underhand delivery is defined as releasing the ball below the waist.
- Number of balls played by a player:
 - 1) One-Player Team—the player is allowed to play four balls.
 - 2) Two-Player Team — each player is allowed to play two balls.
 - 3) Four-Player Team — each player is allowed to play one ball.
- Scoring
 - At the end of each frame (when both teams have exhausted all balls), scoring will be determined as follows: points are awarded to the team whose balls are closer to the pallina than the closest ball of the opposing team, which can be determined by viewing or by mechanical measurements. A player may request a mechanical measurement (Measurements will be taken from the center side of the bocce ball to the center side of the pallina).
 - At the end of a frame, the referee announces the winning points and color to the players outside the court at the pallina end and before the balls are removed, the referee should look to the players for agreement. The players have a right to request a measurement if the players disagree with the referee. When the player or team agrees with the number of points awarded, the court official then proceeds to remove the balls to start the next frame.
 - The scoring team for each frame will also win the pallina advantage for the subsequent frame. The referee will be responsible for validity of the scoreboard and scorecard, so it is important that the team captains verify the accuracy of the posted score at all times.
- Ties During Frame
 - In the event that two opposing balls are equidistant from the pallina (tied), the team that rolled last will continue to roll until the tie is broken. Example: Team A rolls a ball toward the pallina and establishes the point. Then Team B rolls its ball toward the pallina, and the referee determines that they are both exactly the same distance from the pallina. Team B must continue to roll until it has a point closer than Team A’s ball. If Team B does roll up to the point, and Team A hits that ball out re-establishing a tie, Team A must continue to roll until the tie is broken.
- Ties At the End Of A Frame
 - In the event that the two balls closest to the pallina belong to opposing teams and are tied, no points will be awarded. The pallina returns to the team which last delivered it. Play

resumes from the end of the court from which the frame was last played.

DEFINITION OF PLAYING TERMS

- Live Ball: Any ball in play that has been delivered.
- Dead Ball: Any ball that has been disqualified or forfeited. A ball may be disqualified if:
 - It is the result of a penalty.
 - It has gone out of the court.
 - It has come in contact with a person or object which is out of the court.
 - It hits the top of the court boards.
 - It hits the covering over the courts or any supports thereof.
 - It is the result of a foot foul.
 - It is the result of an illegal movement of your (team's) ball.
 - It is the result of interference with a ball in motion by one's own team.
 - It has been played before the pallina or currently delivered ball has come to a complete stop.
- Bocce Ball: The larger playing ball.
- Pallina: A small object ball sometimes called cue ball, beebee, etc.
- Hitting/Shooting: The action of rolling a ball which is thrown with sufficient velocity that it would hit the backboard if it missed the target.
- Bank or Rebound Shots: Bank or rebound shot refers to playing a ball off either the sideboards or backboard.
- Pointing: The action of rolling a ball to obtain a point close to the pallina.
- Frame: The period in the game in which balls are played from one side of the court to the other and points are awarded.
- "In contention": Used across any section of the rule book means, balls that an official would deem to be balls that he/she will potentially need to measure or award as scoring balls.
- Foul: A rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.

FOULS AND PENALTIES

- As soon as it has been determined by the official that a foul has been committed, the official will notify the captains of both teams and inform them of the penalty imposed. The team fouled against has the option to decline any penalty imposed by the official and accept the lie of the ball(s) and continues.
- In both pointing and hitting, the foremost part of the specific foul line will not be surpassed by any part of the player's foot, or any apparatus used by an athlete such as a wheelchair, crutches, cane, etc., after the ball is released and before the ball touches any part of the playing field in front of the specific foul line. An official as a result of witnessing the foul, must call all fouls. The penalty for a player (team) committing the foul will be to declare the specific ball being thrown dead. If possible and safe, the referee will seek to stop the ball just delivered before it reaches the pallina and the other balls "in contention", remove the just released ball from the court and declare the just released ball to be a dead ball. If the just released ball does come in contact with the pallina and/or other balls "in contention" and these balls are moved from their original position, then the referee will place the balls back as close to their original position as possible and play will continue.
- Player plays more than his allotted number of balls with respect to a two- or four-player team – When a player rolls an extra ball during a frame, the ball in question is declared dead. If possible and safe, the referee will seek to stop the ball just delivered before it reaches the pallina and the other balls "in contention", remove the just released ball from the court and declare the just released ball to be a dead ball. If the just released ball does come in contact with the pallina and/or other balls "in contention" and these balls are moved from their original position, then the referee will place the balls

back as close to their original position as possible and play will continue. This may occur when a player on a two-player team plays three balls instead of two or a player on a four-player team plays two balls instead of one. Two- Player Team — the remaining player on a two-player team will only have one ball to play. Four-Player Team — the remaining players who haven't played any balls must decide who is to play the remaining unplayed balls.

- Illegal movement of a ball belonging to your own team — If a player moves one or more of his or her team's balls, the ball(s) are removed from the court and considered dead, and play continues.
- Illegal movement of an opponent's ball — If, after all eight balls have been thrown, a player moves one or more of his/her opponent's balls, the opponent's balls that were moved will be awarded one point each. If a player moves one or more of his/her opponent's balls, and there are remaining unplayed balls, the referee will place the balls as close to their original position as possible and play will continue.
- Illegal movement of the pallina by a player — If the pallina is moved by a player, the opposite team will be awarded as many points as the number of live balls that were "in contention" plus the number of balls yet unplayed. If the team fouled against has no balls "in contention" and no balls remaining, then the frame will be declared dead by the referee and started over at the same end.
- Interference with a ball in motion
 - By one's own team — When a player interferes with his/her team's ball in motion, the referee, as a result of witnessing the foul, must declare the ball being thrown dead. If possible and safe, the referee, will seek to stop the ball just delivered before it reaches the pallina and the other balls "in contention", remove the just released ball from the court and declare the just released ball to be a dead ball. If the just released ball does come in contact with the pallina and/or other balls "in contention" and these balls are moved from their original position, then the referee will place the balls back as close to their original position as possible and play will continue.
 - By opponent's team—If a player interferes with an opponent's ball in motion, the team fouled against has one of the following options: Play the ball over, declare the frame dead, decline the penalty, accept the lie of the touched ball(s) and continues playing.
 - With no disruption of position — If a spectator, animal or object interferes with a ball in motion and that ball does not touch another ball already in play, it must be played over by the same player.
 - With disruption of position — If a spectator, animal or object interferes with a ball in motion and that ball touches another ball already in play and "in contention" the frame is dead.
 - Other disruption of play — Any action which interferes with the position of the pallina or the ball of each team closest to the pallina renders the frame dead. In the event balls other than the pallina or the two opposing balls closest to it are moved, they may be replaced as close as possible to the original position by the two captains or the referee. Such disruptive action may be the result of a dead ball from another court, foreign objects, spectators or animals entering the court and changing the position of the ball(s) in play.
- Wrong color delivery
 - Replaceable — If a player delivers a wrong color ball, the ball may not be stopped by another player or the referee. The ball must be allowed to come to rest and replaced with

- the proper colored ball by the referee.
- Not replaceable — If a player delivers a wrong color ball which cannot be replaced without disturbing another ball already in play the frame is declared dead and replayed from the same end.
 - Wrong rotation of play
 - Initial point — If a team wrongly delivers the pallina and its first ball, the referee will return the pallina and the first ball which was played out of rotation. The referee will then ask the other team to deliver the pallina when restarting the frame from the same end of the court.
 - Subsequent rolls of the proper color in an incorrect sequence — If a player delivers his or her ball when his or her team is “in” and the other team has balls left, the ball in question should if possible and safe be stopped by the referee before it reaches the “balls in contention”, be declared a dead ball and removed from the court. If the referee cannot stop the ball before it reaches the “balls in contention”, the referee should replace the pallina and nearest balls to where they were before the out of rotation delivery took place.

Disqualification

Forfeiture

- Teams with less than the prescribed number of players will forfeit the match.

Delays of Games

- Intentional delay of game
 - If, in the opinion of the official, the game is intentionally delayed without sufficient or valid reason, the official must give a warning. If play is not resumed immediately, the delaying team will forfeit the match.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- Players shall act in a sportsmanlike manner at all times.
- Any act which is deemed as poor sportsmanship, such as insulting language, gestures, actions or words, which display ill will, if flagrant, may result in disqualification.