

| GAME 8 |

BOCCE

Throwing balls toward a target is the oldest game known to mankind. As early as 5000 BC the Egyptians played a form of Bocce with polished rocks. From this early objective, the basic rules of Bocce were born. From Egypt, the game made its way to Greece around 800 BC. The Romans learned the game from the Greeks, and then introduced it throughout the Roman empire. The Roman influence in Bocce is preserved in the game's name; Bocce is derived from the Latin word *bottia*, meaning boss.

Bocce frequently lost and gained popularity throughout the ages. It was Giuseppe Garibaldi, who, while unifying and nationalising Italy, popularised the sport as it is known today.

History

In 1896 the first Bocce Olympiad was held in Athens, Greece. Bocce has been a part of international sports ever since. In modern times, the first Bocce clubs were organized in Italy. Notably the first Italian League was formed in 1947 by fifteen teams in and around the town of Rivoli (Torino). 1947 also marks the beginning of the yearly Bocce World Championships. This Championship event continues today with participants from over thirty nations.



Basic Rules of the Game

Various versions of the game are played across the world with different rules. We will consider the version known as *Bocce Volo*, which is played in European countries and is the most popular version internationally.

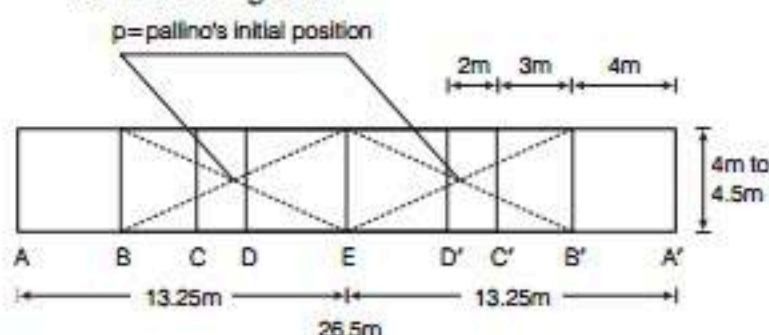
1. The game of bocce consists of:
 - *Punto* throws
 - *Raffa* and *volo* throws which are allowed provided the player has first declared the item (ball or *pallino*) the player wishes to hit.
 - Continuing to throw one's balls for the duration of a frame until one has scored one or more points.
 - Trying to be the first to attain the maximum number of points to win the game.
2. The teams may consist of:
 - Singles: one against one with four balls per player
 - Doubles: two against two with two balls per player
 - Triples: three against three with two balls per player
3. The *Pallino* is spherical ball with a dimension of 4 ± 1 cm diameter and weighs 60 ± 5 grams. All team balls are of 10.7 cm (10.6 for women) diameter and weigh 920 grams (900 for women). The balls of any team must be of the same colour and differ sharply in colour from those of the opposing team.
4. The game begins by placing the *pallino* on point 'p' at the centre of the court's playing area, equidistant from the sides
5. The object of the game is to roll the bocce balls closer to the *pallino* than your opponent.
6. The right to throw the first ball or choose which end to start is determined by the toss of a coin.
7. The ball may be played by making a *punto*, *raffa*, or *volo* throw. It is explained as follows:
 - *Punto* throws are those which aim at getting one's ball as close as possible to a reference point on the court.
 - A *raffa* throw is one that aims at hitting, with or without bouncing, any given ball, either the opponents' or one's own ball, or the *pallino*, after having declared to the referee the item to be hit.
 - A *volo* throw is one that aims at hitting, either directly or with the support of some part of the court surface, either the opponents' or one's own ball, or the *pallino*, after having declared the item to the referee.
8. This 'nearest ball' rule governs the sequence of thrown balls. The team whose ball is the closest to the *pallino* is called the 'in' ball and the opposing side ball the 'out' ball. Whenever a team gets 'in', it steps aside and allows the 'out' team to bowl.
9. A team has the option of rolling, throwing, 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.
10. The place where each ball comes to rest must be marked by the referee using a different marking for each team.
11. A player also has the option of 'spocking' or hitting out any ball in play in trying to obtain a point, or decreasing the opposing team's points.
12. At the end of each frame (when both teams have exhausted 4 balls each), the referee will determine the points scored.
13. Scoring points are all those balls of one team closer to the *pallino* 1 point for 1 ball than the closest ball of the opposing team, which can be determined by viewing or by mechanical measurement.
14. A ball has completed its run whenever
 - It has been played by the *punto* throw, comes to a rest, and its position has been marked, or
 - It has been played by either a *raffa* or *volo* throw, hit the declared item (ball or *pallino*) and has surpassed the latter.
15. If a ball should be considered invalid, the team who threw it at the beginning of the game or in any subsequent frame must throw another ball until they succeed in making a valid throw.
16. One point is assigned to each of one's team's own balls that rest closer to the *pallino* than that of the opposing team. The game is won by the first team to attain a total of 15 points (In some competitions this may be 12 points).

Dimensional Diagrams of the Equipment Used in Bocce

Diagram and other details of Bocce Volo Court

1. The game's playing area is a flat and perfectly levelled surface subdivided into courts enclosed by wooden planks or other non-metallic sides.
2. The court must be 26.50 metres long (variation from 27.5 to 24.5 metres is allowed) and between 4.00 and 4.50 metres wide.

3. The ends of the court must be made with swinging headboards, possibly of synthetic rubber, hinged on the upper part of the sideboards. The headboards should not be fastened to either the sideboards or the court surface in order to prevent the balls or jack from bouncing back.



Terminology

Advantage

The team throwing the *pallino* is said to have a "*pallino* advantage" because they can place the *pallino* where they want it on the court and have a clear shot to place the first bocce ball.

Backboards

The shorter court walls at each end of the court. Also called endboards or backwalls.

Banking

Throwing the bocce ball such that it hits and bounces off the sideboards towards the *pallino*.

Foul

An act committed by a thrower that violates the game rules. A team/ player is penalised as specified in the rules for committing a foul.

Hitting or Spocking

A declared underhand bowling type hard throw directly at the balls on the court to purposely hit and move an opponent's ball or the *pallino*. Sometimes called shooting, bombing or *raffa*.

Illegal Movement

This occurs when a legally thrown ball is moved from its resting position by a player or referee.

In-bound Lines

Lines marked on the sideboards/ backboards/ court surface to define the 12 inch

Interference

boundary for the initial *pallino* throw.

No Point or Tie

A legally thrown ball is interfered with while moving by someone or something not on the playing surface before the throw.

This occurs when the closest balls of both teams are equidistant from the *pallino*. The team delivering the last ball must throw again, or if all balls have been played, no points are awarded for that frame.

Out Team

The team which does not have the closest ball to the *pallino*.

Pointing Foul Line

The first foul line marked on the sideboards/ court surface near each backboard behind which the *pallino* and balls rolled for points must be released. Sometimes called the lagging, throwing, pitch, *punto*, or *puntata* foul line.

Referee

An independent official that enforces all game rules, directs play, determines in the team, makes measurements and determines team points for each frame.

Scoreboard

Numbers 1 through 12 arranged similar to a clock face with an arrow pointing to the score for the red or green team. The scoreboard can be a single set of numbers with a red and green arrow or a separate set of numbers for each colour.

Sideboards

The longer court walls parallel to the direction of throwing.

Fundamental Skills & Techniques Used

Some basic techniques are

1. **Playing first** If a player plays first, he should try to place his first ball as close as possible in front of the *pallino*. This forces the opposing player to play around this ball.

Getting around blocking balls On a regular tournament court it will be possible to bounce balls off the sidewall.

This can aid in getting a ball around blocking balls. But remember, tournament rules stipulate that balls hitting the backboard first are removed from play and their effects are reversed.

3. **Maintaining your advantage** When both teams have a ball close to the *pallino*, but yours is slightly closer, it is sometimes wise to not risk hitting your own ball and losing the advantage. This can be accomplished simply by tossing the ball considerably short.
4. **Hitting opponent's balls** Throwing the ball in the air past the centre point is not legal; so lobbing the ball over the opponent's blocking balls becomes problematic. Often the best way to improve the position of a side is to either hit an opponent's ball or to strike the *pallino*.
5. **Ball placement technique** Getting points is dependent on getting balls closer to the *pallino* than the opponents. To do this requires accuracy. But it also requires discretion in placement. It is therefore better to toss the balls slightly short of the *pallino* than slightly beyond or beside because this will help in blocking opponent's shots.
6. **Gripping the ball and throwing** Before tossing a ball, hold it in the front portion of your palm, spreading your fingers out evenly beneath the ball, supporting the weight. Don't apply any pressure with your thumb because the purpose of your thumb is to simply provide some guidance and stability. Then throw the ball with your palm facing up, or try a palm down throw to try to create a good back-spin.

Important Tournaments

International

- Special Olympics
- World Bocce Championships
- Oberto Bocce Tournament, Italy

National

None, as this game is not officially played in India

Current Awardees

None, as this game is not officially played in India

VIVA-VOCE

1 The word "bocce" comes from which language?

Ans Italian

2 The small white or yellow ball, which is thrown first to start the game is called what?

Ans Pallino or Jack

3 When throwing to start the game, the white ball should cross what part of the court?

Ans The middle

4 A Bocce ball is considered dead when it hits what?

Ans The back wall or backboard.

5 What is a *raffa* shot in international Bocce?

Ans A ground throw at another ball to move that ball out of the way.

6 What is an acceptable way to use a measuring device to decide points?

Ans The most common method used is an extendable pointer that can be placed between the ball and the *pallino* to measure the distance.

7 How do you score points in Bocce?

Ans By getting your balls closer to the *pallino* than the opponent's balls.

8 Where did the primitive game of Bocce originate?

Ans Egypt

9 How many points would a side score if they had 2 balls closest to the *pallino*?

Ans Two

10 When and where was the first Bocce olympiad held?

Ans 1896 in Athens, Greece.

11 Who popularised the Bocce sport in Italy?

Ans Giuseppe Garibaldi

12 How long is a standard Bocce ball court?

Ans 26.5 metres

13 How far is the foul line marked out from each backstop?

Ans 6 metres

14 What other sport is Bocce closely related to?

Ans Lawn bowls