

i n t r o d u c i n g



BOCCCE



I wish to thank the current Board of Governors for adding the game of "Bocce" to the group of sports that are played and enjoyed by all members of the Hammock Dunes Club. After four years of my trying to obtain this result, the Board stepped up to the tee and hit a "hole in one". They deserve our sincere thanks for their welcomed decision. Two bocce courts are to be built, and it is my predictions that once play is started, reservations to play will be needed well in advance, and a cry for more courts will ensue. Let me add that Bocce is the second most played sport in the World. Soccer is first; Golf is third.

Bocce is not a new sport. It goes back into the antiquity of time. If one has never played Bocce, let me say that it does not require any special athletic ability to play. Both men and women play Bocce, and it is enjoyed throughout the world. The "United States Bocce Federation" is the motivating force behind the sport in the United States, including four regional sectors that encompass all the states. There are set rules of play for major tournaments, including those in Europe, but the various states and/or bocce clubs do change certain rules to comply with their versions of play. The changes are usually based on making the game more enjoyable and easier to play.

Bocce is a game in which ages and social class fuse and disappear. On the court there are neither young people nor old people, and the beginner can play with the veteran. The spirit of the game of Bocce is the basis on which its deeply peaceful character is founded. It is the beginning of long friendships.

I recommend that play at Hammock Dunes commences with the normal rules of play so that all can enjoy the game. The more difficult aspects of play can be attempted when additional experience will lead one to do so. Attached is a history of the game, methods of play, hints on the basic approaches to the game, rules of play, and other interesting or special data.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Renato V. Iacobucci".

Renato V. Iacobucci



Table of Contents

1. History of Bocce
2. What is Bocce?
3. The Basic Rules of Bocce
4. Open Bocce Regulations of the United States Bocce Federation
5. Techniques of Play
6. Skills of Bocce
7. Playing Tips from Abruzzo, ITALY



History of Bocce

Throwing balls toward a target is the oldest game known to mankind. As early as 5000 B.C. the Egyptians played a form of bocce with polished rocks. Graphic representations of figures tossing a ball or polished stone have been recorded as early as 5200 B.C. While bocce today looks quite different from its early predecessors, the unbroken thread of bocce's lineage is the consistently common objective of trying to come as close to a fixed target as possible. From this early objective, the basic rules of bocce were born. From Egypt the game made its way to Greece around 800 B.C. The Romans learned the game from the Greeks, then introduced it throughout the empire. The Roman influence in bocce is preserved in the game's name; bocce derives from the Vulgate Latin *bottia*, meaning boss.

The early Romans were among the first to play a game resembling what we know as bocce today. In early times they used coconuts brought back from Africa and later used hard olive wood to carve out bocce balls. Beginning with Emperor Augustus, bocce became the sport of statesman and rulers. From the early Greek physician I pocrates 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.

As the game enjoyed rapid growth throughout Europe, being the sport of nobility and peasants alike, it began to threaten with the health of nations. The popularity of the game was said to interfere with the security of the state because it took too much time away from archery practice and other military exercises. Consequently, Kings Carlos IV and V prohibited the playing of bocce, and doctors from the University of Montpellier, France, tried to discredit the claim that playing bocce had great therapeutic effect in curing rheumatism.

In 1576, the Republic of Venice publicly condemned the sport, punishing those who played with fines and imprisonment. And perhaps most grave was the condemnation by the Catholic Church which deterred the laity and officially prohibited clergyman from playing the game by proclaiming bocce a means of gambling.



History of Bocce - continued

Contrary to the rest of Europe, the great game of balls thrived in Great Britain. Such nobility as Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Francis Drake were avid fans. 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!"

The sport first came to America in the English version called bowls from the French boules meaning ball. In accord with how the game was played in Britain, American players threw the ball not on stone dust (as is done today in bocce) but on close cropped grass which some say is the origin of the modern lawn. It has been noted that one early American playing field was Bowling Green at the southern tip of Manhattan and that George Washington built a court at Mount Vernon in the 1780s.

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.

Thanks to many Italian immigrants at the turn of the century, bocce has come to flourish in the United States. During its beginnings in the U.S. there were as many versions of the game as there were towns the immigrants had left. Bringing some order to the game is the Collegium Cosmicum ad Buxear, the preeminent bocce organization headquartered in Rome, Italy.

It should be added that the oral traditions of bocce are just as much an important part of the game. Throw out a pallino and become part of the long heritage of the game from great thinkers such as Galileo and da Vinci, to rulers Augustus and Queen Elizabeth, 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, and next to soccer, the most popular game in the world.



What is Bocce?

Bocce is a competitive game of skill. The purpose of the game is to roll the bocce, a four and 1/2 inch ball weighing about three pounds, as close as possible to the pallino, a one and 3/4 inch ball which is rolled down the alley first. The bocce coming closest to the pallino scores a point. Twelve points constitutes a game. (The official size bocce ball is 4 and 1/5 inches in diameter, 13 and 1/2 inches in circumference and weighs nearly three pounds.)

The game requires good judgment of distance. The ability to size up a situation immediately, a good eye to spot contours and rough spots in the alley, and the proper psychological frame of mind.

Bocce fans claim the game helps improve their bowling, golf and shuffleboard because it has many features of these games in it. There are no age limits for Bocce players. Many elderly citizens play the game for relaxation and exercise.

It is clear that, considering the weight of the balls and the distance they are thrown, apart from ability and precision that are the basis of the game, "Bocce" also demands a certain amount of strength and stamina. The physical effort is notable above all for the "bowlers". For every one bowlers or pointers the activity of "Bocce" revives all muscular movements throughout the body and particularly the arms, legs, and main trunk constituting an excellent basic sport.



The Basic Rules of Bocce

Equipment

Consists of a set of eight large bocce balls (half of which are of a different color or pattern) and a smaller ball called a "pallino".

Players

The game is played with two teams; each team can have one, two, or four players.

Four Player Team - each player, on both ends, throws two balls

Two Player Team - each player, on both ends, throws four balls

One Player Team - each player throws four balls, and then moves to other end of court to start new frame

Play

The toss of a coin determines which team will start. The starting team chooses which color (or pattern) ball they will play with. The first team member throws the pallino and then rolls his/her first ball as close to the pallino as possible. It is now up to the opposing team to roll until it beats the point of the other team.

If the opposing team succeeds in placing one of their balls closer to the pallino, the starting team must then roll again to attempt to get closer or "better" the point. Each team continues to roll until it beats the point of the opposing team.

While the object is to get closer to the pallino, it is permissible for a player to roll his/her ball so as to knock an opponent's ball away from the pallino. Likewise, a player may knock or move the pallino toward his/her team's ball. The pallino is playable anywhere on the playing service.



The Basic Rules of Bocce - continued

Scoring

When all balls have been played, this concludes the frame and ONE team is awarded one point for each of the balls that is closer to the pallino than the ball of the opposing team.

Thus a team may score up to four points per frame. If the closest ball of each team is equal in distance from the pallino, NO points are awarded.

The team that scored in a prior frame starts the next frame by throwing out the pallino and playing their first ball. Play continues until a team wins the game by scoring twelve points.

In "tournament play" and/or "special play" the tournament host may change this number.



Open Bocce Regulations of the United States Bocce Federation

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 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), and choose the color of the balls.

Tossing the Pallino

A player may toss the pallino any distance, so long as the pallino passes the center line of the court, and does not hit the back 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 to the original team. Any time a player is rolling, opposing players must remain outside the court.

Starting the Game

The first ball will be thrown by the team who originally tossed the pallino. If that bocce ball hits the back board, the team must roll again. Otherwise, you step aside and that team does not roll again, until the opposing team has either rolled one if its bocce balls closer to the pallino, or has thrown all of its balls. Whenever a team gets a ball closer, it steps aside and lets the other team roll. The other team throws until it beats (not ties) the opposing ball. This continues until both teams have used all their bocce balls. The team who 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 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 play and return all balls to their approximate position.



Open Bocce Regulations of the United States Bocce Federation - continued

Foul Lines

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

Scoring

Only one team scores in a frame. One point is given for each ball that is closer to the pallino 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 pallino, no points are awarded to either team and the game resumes from the opposite end of the court, with the same team tossing the pallino. Games are normally played to 12 points. The tournament host may change this number.

Balls Hitting the back wall

A ball hitting the back board is dead & must be removed from play unless it first hits another ball in which case all balls are valid. If a thrown 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.

Pallino hitting the back wall

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 center line, the frame will end and play will resume from the opposite end of the court, with the same team tossing the pallino.

Measuring and Disputes

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



Techniques of Play

The traditional game of bocce calls for three styles or methods of play. The puntata (or "gentle" method), the volo (or "strong flying" method), and the raffa ("strong smash" method). Experience, ability, strategy and preference will determine the method chosen.

Choosing the Right Technique

While many other terms have been coined to describe these techniques, all the beginner needs to know is that the three methods require a certain finesse. The puntata method relies on a slow moderate approach and method to gently roll the bocce as close as possible to the target ball. In the volo technique the bocce ball is tossed in the air, aimed to land on or near the target ball. The raffa is a strong shot like the volo shot except that the raffa does not lob. All three methods require practice to master. Mastering either one will assure the player rewarding results.

The Puntata Method

This method is the most widely used. It is of particular advantage where the court surface is well manicured, smooth, level and generally free of debris (most indoor courts and outdoor courts traditionally meet this criteria). The player delivers the ball in a crouched position so that the ball is released in a slow motion. The method requires a gentle touch. The skillful "puntatore" will try to roll the bocce ball as close to the target ball as possible with a minimum of force; generally following a path in the middle of the playing surface. The puntata method is best used early in the play when there are no other balls to block the path of the target, and where the surface is very smooth, allowing the bocce ball to travel a true path.

As with any offensive strategy, there are pros and cons to the puntata method. Lets say that the skilled puntata player finesses his ball very close to the target ball on the first play of the game. The ball's position, while excellent, is easily dislodged. On the positive side, it has the effect of forcing the opposing player into a defensive mode, thus limiting some of the opponent's options. In this situation the opposing player would most likely resort to a "strong" shot or raffa. This can be effective but unpredictable.



Techniques of Play - continued

The Volo Method

The volo (strong flying) shot requires that the bocce ball be tossed high in the air with a reverse spin at the moment of release. This spin will cause the ball to stop at the point of impact. Obviously the volo shot requires a high degree of accuracy that only practice can achieve. The volo player must not only gauge the proper distance, but also the degree of spin that will produce the most effective shot. Further, the volo shot has to be called before shooting, and if it does not hit its intended target, the ball is removed. If the ball misses its target, but does not hit another ball it is not removed.

I recommend that the volo shot not be used until one has acquired sufficient experience in that shot.

The Raffa Method

This popular type of "smash" shot is referred to in Italian as the raffa. The raffa is a strong shot like the volo shot, except that the raffa does not lob. It is executed close to the ground. Again this is not a precision shot. Rather, it is aimed at dislodging or disrupting a well-placed formation.

Like the volo shot, the raffa shot has the option of being executed over or underhand. In order to gain proper momentum, the shot requires a "trotting" approach. The player should start far back on the court, take a few running steps, and release the bocce ball prior to crossing the play area line. Once having released the ball, the player should continue briskly in the direction of the shot with a follow-through motion.

As with any sport, the key word for success in bocce is "practice". The beginning player should be patient, striving at first for accuracy rather than brute force. In time, he/she will be able to combine both accuracy and force in a winning style of play.



Skills of Bocce

Two Step Run Up

Stand with feet together, arms by the side, facing the back of the target area. Take two steps away from the target area, turn and stop. The arms should be straight and hang beside the body.

1. You may step off either foot depending on your style of shooting. As the first step is taken bring the arm back. Be sure that the arm swings back in a straight line.
2. The arm should be at the top of the backswing before the second step is started. On the second step the arm should come forward.
3. The body should continue to move forward as the arm reaches the release point. The ball is released and the body continues to move forward for a complete follow through.

Four Step Run

Once the two step throw is coordinated with a smooth release, start using the four step run. Start with the feet together, arms by the side facing the back of the target area. Take four steps forward, turn and stop. The arms should be straight and hang beside the body.

1. You may step off on either foot depending on your style of shooting. The arm should remain straight and by the side,
2. On the second and third steps the arm should be taken back slowly in a straight line with the target.
3. The arm should not reach the top of the backswing until the end of the third step.
4. As the fourth step is taken, swing the arm forward in a straight line with the target.
5. As the ball is released, the body should continue to move.
6. Continue to run forward in a straight line with the target.



Skills of Bocce - continued

Exercises

Practice the "Straight Throw Delivery" at a modest distance first without the ball; then with the ball, but no target, and then at the suggested target. Once mastered, progress to the Two Step Run using the same exercise pattern above. Again, once mastered, progress to the Four Step Run using the same exercise pattern. Upon satisfactory completion at a modest distance, increase distance progressively.

Pointing

Although there are many ways to deliver the bocce ball it is the court surface that determines which is the best type of delivery. The pointing delivery is a skill that requires good judgment of distance and the ability to read the slopes in the court. The three deliveries noted below will enable the player to adapt to all surfaces.

1. Slide
This delivery is used when the court surface is smooth and fast enabling the player to maintain control of direction.
2. Lifted
This delivery is best used when the court surfaces is rough, particularly the area in front of the playing line.
3. Raised
This is the least accurate of the three deliveries. It should only be used when the court surface is very uneven or soft. The ball is thrown beyond the halfway mark of the target area so that the court surface has less effect on the ball.



Skills of Bocce - continued

Basics for all Pointing Techniques

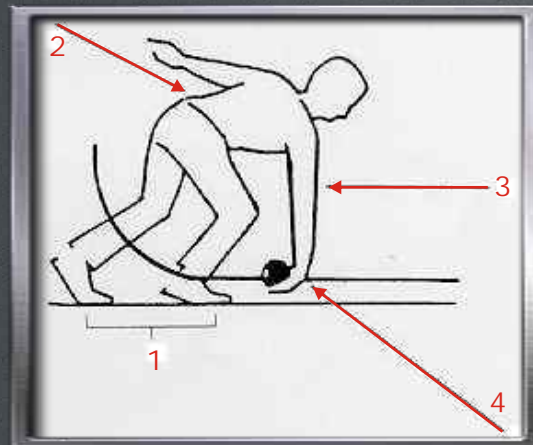
1. Hand and Arm Position: For all types of pointing delivery the arm should be kept straight and close to the body throughout the swing.
2. The ball should be clasped in the hand with a light grip. The hand should face the target. The thumb and little finger should be positioned on exact opposites of the ball.
3. Feet Position: Most of the weight should be on the front leg with the back foot touching the ground to aid stability or to give added momentum.
4. Body Position: The body should be bent at the waist at an angle that is comfortable for the player, the head should be kept still with the shoulders remaining level throughout the delivery.



Skills of Bocce - continued

Slide Technique

1. Feet Position
 - a. Position the feet 1 1.5 feet apart.
 - b. Keep the back leg straight with the back foot just touching the ground.
2. Body Position
 - a. The body should be bent at the waist with the back straight.
 - b. The player should be well balanced before the backswing is started.
3. Hand and Arm Position
 - a. Keep the arm straight with the hand facing the target.
 - b. The hand should be level with the ankle.
 - c. The delivery arm should be kept straight throughout the swing and follow through.
4. Release
 - a. Move the hand directly forward without breaking at the wrist to maintain accuracy.
 - b. Keep the head down so that the swing is flat.
5. Follow Through
 - a. When the arm is level with the front leg, move the body forward in a straight line towards the target to maintain accuracy.





Playing Tips from Abruzzo, ITALY

On Lagging

Think of the target ball as a speed limit. If the target ball is close, the speed limit is slow. The further away, the faster the speed limit.

Relax. Concentrate. Set yourself up. Line up. DON'T RELEASE. Relax again. Then release.

Concentrate on the lay of the court. Watch others balls. Plan where you are going to roll.

Follow through. Take 1 or 2 steps forward after you release to assure your follow through. Never turn away after you release eventually you will turn your hand/arm.

Watch your ball as it rolls. Follow through up to the next line (C line). It gives your opponent the sense that you are very much into the game and have the concentration and power to win.

Think about the shot and relax.

ALWAYS lag directly on your target, spot or ball. If your court slopes slightly, mentally adjust your target or spot, but only aim for your target or spot. Concentrate on your distance.



Playing Tips from Abruzzo, ITALY - continued

On Shooting

Start your movement slowly with a walk building your momentum naturally.

Never go too fast on the take off.

Reach out when releasing your shot. It will help keep your arm straight and in the direction you are aiming.

Keep your ARM in line with your target. Your body should not be in front of your target.

Align your position so as to give yourself the best view or opening at the target.

In attempting to shoot a ball to a particular side to maximize points, do not aim to the side of the ball. Move your body a step to the side you want the struck ball to travel, but always aim for the center of the ball.

Because of the centrifugal force of the ball there is a natural tendency for the ball to turn "in" i.e. left if you are right handed.

Take a slight step to the right if you want to maximize your chance to hit the ball on the right. This technique is accentuated the longer the shot is. This enhances your possibility for the struck ball to go in the direction you want.



Playing Tips from Abruzzo, ITALY - continued

Playing Techniques

Discuss pallino placement. It may end up affecting the result of the round.

Sometimes it may appear that a lag is the appropriate tactic. However, if you have potentially good point ball(s) at the back of the court, give consideration to shooting the pallino.

Conversely, if your opponent has the point and you have one ball left and no balls at the back of the court and the pallino is exposed, consider rolling a ball close to the back for defensive reasons and to deter your opponent from shooting the pallino as mentioned above.

General

Practice everything 1000 times!

Don't get discouraged. Relax and concentrate on every ball as if it meant the game.



thanks for taking the time to review
see you on the courts

BOCCCE