

Basic Rules for Bocce Ball

At Falls Village Flower Farm

Bocce is played with eight large balls and one smaller target or object ball, called a pallina. There are four balls per team and they are made of a different color or pattern to distinguish the balls of one team from those of the other team.

The game is played with two teams, with each team having one, two, or four players. For four-player teams, each player throws one ball. For two-player teams, each player throws two balls. For one-player teams, each player throws four balls. When there are multiple players on a team, a playing rotation is determined at the start of a game and is maintained throughout the entire game.

A game begins with the toss of a coin. The team that wins the coin toss can choose either the color of the balls they will use, or to have first toss of the pallina.

To start a game, the pallina is rolled or tossed by a member of the team having won the coin toss and chose pallina, or lost the coin toss but who's opponent chose their lucky ball color over the pallina. A player can toss the pallina any distance as long as it passes the center line of the court and stays within the boundaries of the court. If the player fails to toss the ball properly into play, a member of the opposing team will toss the ball into play. If the opposing team fails to properly toss the pallina into play, the toss reverts to a member of the original team.

The player tossing the pallina must deliver the first ball. If the ball lands outside of the boundaries of the court, that team must roll again until the first ball is put into play. Otherwise, that player steps aside and the opposing team will then deliver their balls until one of its Bocce balls is closer to the pallina or has thrown all its balls.

The "nearest ball" rule governs the sequence of thrown balls. The side whose ball is 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. The other team throws until it gets its ball closer (not ties) to the pallina. This continues until both teams have thrown all their Bocce balls. After both teams have exhausted all their balls, a frame is over and points are awarded. The game resumes by teams throwing from the opposite end of the court. The team that was awarded points in the previous frame begins the next frame by tossing the pallina into play.

All balls must be thrown underhanded, no lofting, and the player must not violate the foul line. The foul line is used to deliver all balls down the court with the intent of getting a ball closer to the pallina, knocking the opponent's ball away from the pallina, or hitting the pallina so that it ends up closer to your team's ball.

A player should not step on or over the foul line before releasing any ball.

Any ball that goes outside the boundaries of the court is considered a dead ball and is removed immediately from play until the end of a frame. If the pallina is knocked outside the boundaries of the court during play, the frame ends with no points awarded and a new frame is started.

At the end of each frame, points will be awarded. Only one team scores in a frame. One point is awarded for each ball that is closer to the pallina than the closest ball of the opposing team, or their number of "in" balls. In the event that the closest ball of each team is the same distance from the pallina, no points will be awarded and the pallina returns to the team that delivered it. Only balls which are distinguishably closer to the pallina than any of the opponent's balls are awarded points. All measurements should be made from the center of the pallina to the edge of a Bocce ball. Games are played to an agreed number of points with the first team reaching said points being the winner of a game.