



Bocce Manual

Rules, Regulations & Training Information

All SOKY Bocce matches and Tournaments should be run according to US Bocce Federation Rules. Modifications to those rules can be found in this manual.

Revised April 2023

Special Olympics
Kentucky



SOKY SPORT DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

SOKY would like to recognize the following individuals for serving on the Basketball Sport Advisory Team. Team members will be busy throughout the Basketball season as they will be viewing teams on screening days, attending Regional Tournaments, helping with the State Tournament, evaluating the program and assisting in the future development of SOKY Basketball.

Please feel free to call any member of the Team if you should have any questions or comments.

BOCCE SPORT DEVELOPMENT TEAM MEMBERS

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GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS HEAT, COLD AND LIGHTNING WEATHER POLICIES

Heat Guidelines

- A heat index of 95-99 degrees Fahrenheit will result in a shortened event.
- A heat index of 100 degrees Fahrenheit and above will result in a cancelled or postponed event.

Cold Guidelines

- A wind chill of 10 degrees Fahrenheit and below will result in a cancelled event.

Lightning Guidelines

- Activity may not be resumed or started for 30 minutes after both the last sound of thunder and the last flash of lightning.

General Statement

Staff of Special Olympics Kentucky, our number one priority is the safety of our athletes, volunteers, and spectators. It is to be understood that all cancellations will be decided as soon as possible, and to assume the event is still on if you have not heard anything from a staff member via email and/or by phones. You may also check for updates on our website and all our social media accounts, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In advance, we greatly appreciate your cooperation with this, and ask that you abide by the policies above for both competition and practice/training.

OFFICIAL EVENTS

The Official Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Bocce' Competitions. National governing body rules, (Special Olympics International) shall be employed along with Special Olympics Kentucky state rules.

- Singles (one player per team)
- Doubles (two players per team)
- Team Competition (four players per team)
- Unified Sports Bocce Doubles (two players per team)
- Unified Sports Bocce Team (four players per team)

BASIC RULES FOR A BOCCÉ COMPETITION

- Divisioning scores will be used to determine divisions for establishing sections.
- The format for the competition can vary from a single elimination, double elimination, or a round robin.
- "Full tournament sized" balls, usually green and red, are used for the tournament.
- Flags/bats/paddles of the same color as the balls are used.
- In singles, players will play four balls each and the winning score will be first to 12 points.
- In pairs/doubles, players will play two balls each and the winning score will be first to 12 points.
- In fours/teams players will play one ball each and the winning score will be first to 16 points. Athletes will follow the direction of the court officials at all times.
- Ten-foot foul line, thirty-foot halfway lines are to be used during a competition.
- All foul line violations are to be called as violations and penalties imposed.
- A incorrect numbers of balls played or incorrect order of play are called as violations and penalties imposed.
- Once all bocce balls have been rolled from both teams points will be awarded based on number of balls closer to the pallina than the opposing teams. Only one team can be awarded points per end played.
- Games will be completed at the completion of the end in which a team scores the appropriate total number points.

COURT AND EQUIPMENT

Court

- 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, provided 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. The end walls should be at least (12 inches) high. The end walls should be composed of a rigid material such as wood or Plexiglas. The side walls must be at minimum, as high as the bocce balls. The side or end walls may be utilized during play for back shots or rebound shots. Lines measuring (2 inches) in width should be marked on the court for the following:
 - Foul line for pointing, hitting or spocking – 3.05 meters (10 foot line) from the backboards.
 - 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 (30 foot line) or the frame is considered dead.
 - The 10 foot and 30-foot lines should be drawn from sideboard to sideboard.

BOCCE COURT

10 Feet	Ten feet from backboard equals inbounds for pallina at start of frame and foul line for pointing and shooting (hitting or spocking).
30 feet	Thirty feet from backboard equals center court line. The pallina must pass this point at the start of the frame.
10 feet	Ten feet from backboard equals inbounds for pallina at start of frame and foul line for pointing and shooting (hitting or spocking).

EQUIPMENT

- Bocce balls may be manufactured of wood or a composition material and must be of equal size. Official tournament ball sizes may be from 107 millimeters (4.20 inches) to 110 millimeters (4.33 inches). The color of the balls is immaterial provided that the four balls of one team are clearly and visibly distinct from the four balls of the opposing team.
- The pallina must be larger than 63 millimeters (2.5 inches) or smaller than 48 millimeters (1.875 inches) and should be of a color visibly distinct from both teams' bocce ball colors.
- A measuring device may be any device that has the capacity to accurately measure the distance between two objects and is acceptable to tournament officials. For divisioning purposes, a retractable steel tape graduated in millimeters should be used.

RULES OF COMPETITION

The Game

- 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. The large balls are also inscribed with distinctive lines to identify the balls of the players on the same team.
- A coin toss by the referee will determine which team has the pallina and choice of ball color. In the absence of a referee, the two team captains will execute the coin toss. The coin toss should take place on the court.
- The team possessing the pallina will have three attempts at placing the pallina beyond the 9.125 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.
- The pallina is rolled or tossed by a member of the team having won the coin toss to start the game. The player tossing 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.

- It is always incumbent upon the team with the pallina advantage to 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 incumbent upon Team A to re-establish the initial point.
- 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 “spocking” or 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.

The tournament director shall have the discretion to allow for certain modification/interpretations of the current technical rules based upon a physical disability characteristic. Such interpretations shall be requested and ruled on prior to the athlete’s participation in a competition and shall not have advantage over another athlete. Delivery action interpretations will be concerned with the action a limb(s) is performing a throw or roll.

- Two player team – each player is allowed to play two balls.
- No coaching from the sidelines. That includes team coaches and spectators.
- In doubles or team play (regular and/or unified sports), discussion with any athlete is prohibited once the athlete steps onto the court and the first pallina is thrown.
- If an official determines that a coach/partner/spectator is violating this rule, the official may sanction unsportsmanlike conduct or expulsion from the games.
- 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 are taken from the center side of the bocce ball to the center side of the pallina. At the end of a frame, when 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- Winning score- Two-player team (two balls per player) = 12 points. This scoring procedure is most common in major tournaments; however, variations may be acceptable.
- Scoring procedure for tournaments: At the discretion of the tournament director, games may be played to reach the target number of points or to a time duration.
- Scorecard – It is the responsibility of each team captain to sign the scorecard after a match. The signatures will indicate the indisputability of the final score. Games in which protests will be filed should not be signed by any captain who disagrees with the score or its validity.

Player Designation

- On any team, the captain must be designated and made known to the officials before play begins. The captain may not be changed during a game but may be changed during a tournament. The tournament officials must be notified of this change prior to any subsequent games.
- The players of any given team may elect to play their balls in any rotation, provided the one who tosses the pallina delivers the first bocce ball. The rotation may vary from frame to frame; however, no player may deliver more than his/her allotted number of balls per frame.

Timeouts, Delays of Games and Checking Position of Points

- The official may grant a timeout whenever the circumstances appear to be valid. The timeout will be limited to five minutes.
- 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.
- Delays caused by weather, acts of God, civil disorder, or other unforeseen reasons. In such delays, the ruling of the tournament director will be decisive and final.
- One player from each team may proceed down the sides of the court before delivering his/her ball.

Penalties

- Immediately upon determination 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 ruling of the official is final, except as otherwise provided for hereafter.
- For conditions not specifically covered in these rules, the tournament director's ruling shall be decisive and final.
- Any protest to an official's or tournament director's decision must be made by a Special Olympics Head Bocce coach within 15 minutes of the completion of any game or the decision made by the official or tournament director will be considered as accepted. Protests will be acknowledged and judged based on merit in circumstances not specifically proved for hereunder.
- If a team must forfeit a match as a result of not being present for a scheduled match, or as a result of violations hereunder prescribed, no official protest will be acknowledged.

Specific Fouls

- In both pointing and hitting, the foremost part of the specific foul line will not be surpassed by any art 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. A referee, because 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. The referee will wait until the just released ball comes to a complete stop and then remove the just released ball from the court. If the ball comes in contact with the other balls on the court or the pallina 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. Then a player rolls an extra ball during a frame, the ball is question is declared dead. The referee will wait until the just released ball comes to a complete stop and then remove the just released ball from the court. If the ball comes in contact with the other balls on the court or the pallina and these balls are moved from their original position, the referee will place the balls back as close to their original position as possible and play will continue. This condition will exist when a player on a two player team plays three balls instead of two or a two player team will only have one ball to play. For the four-player team the remaining players who haven't played any balls must decide who is to play the remaining unplayed balls.
- If a player moves one or more of his/her team's balls, the ball(s) are removed from the court and considered dead and play continues.
- 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.

- 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 over by the referee and started over at the same end.

Accidental or Premature Movement of Balls or Pallina by Referee

- If a referee, either while measuring or otherwise, moves a ball “in contention” or the pallina, the frame is considered dead and started over at the same end.
- Accidental or premature movement of a ball or pallina, by a referee after the balls are played – if the point or points were obvious to the referee, the points will be awarded. All uncertain points will not be awarded, and the frame is considered dead and started over at the same end.

Interference With the Ball in Motion

- 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. The dead ball is then removed from the court. The referee, after declaring a foul, should attempt to stop the advancement of the ball as it proceeds down the court, so that it doesn’t strike any balls in play. If the referee cannot stop the ball as it advances down the court, the referee will wait until the ball comes to a complete stop and then remove that ball from the court. If the ball comes in contact with the other balls on the court or the pallina 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.
- 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 ball dead.
 - Decline the penalty, accept the lie of the touched ball(s) and continues playing.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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

- 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.
- If a player delivers a wrong color ball which cannot be replaced without disturbing another ball already in play, the points of the play will be recorded at that time, wrong color ball counting for the team which rolled or delivered it, and play will continue. It will be the responsibility of the two team captains and the referee to maintain identity of the “wrong color” ball(s).

Wrong Rotation of Play

- If a team wrongly delivers the pallina and its first ball, the referee will return both pallina and the and begin the frame over from the same end.
- If a player delivers his/her ball when hi/her team is “in” and the other team still has balls left, the ball in question remains where it comes to rest, is considered “live” and play continues. This ruling holds true, regardless of who indicated which ball was “in” since it is the responsibility of each team to request a measurement when an “in” point is questionable.

Officials Objections

- Each team has the right to object to a designated official for any reason prior to the start of the game. This objection will be considered and decided upon by the tournament director.
- No member of a team or registered substitute of a team will be allowed to assist in the officiating of a game in which that team is also playing.

Substitute

- Substitutions of officials may occur during a game only with the permission of the tournament director and both team captains.
- Additional officials may be assigned to any games during play, provided permission is granted by the tournament director.
- Officials may be changed during the course of a game if either team presents sufficient cause to the tournament director.
- Referees should be clearly distinguishable from players.

Broken Ball

- If during a frame a ball or pallina should break, the frame will be considered dead. Replacement of a ball or pallina will be the responsibility of the tournament director.

Moving the Ball

- No player may play his/her ball until a pallina or another ball has come to a complete rest.

Players

- Whenever possible, a player should move off the court when an opponent is playing.
- 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 engender ill will, if flagrant, may result in disqualification.

Attire

- Each team must wear matching shirts for competition. T-shirts may be worn but can not be sleeveless or be an SOKY event t-shirt.
- Tennis shoes are required, no open toe shoes.
- Shorts or long pants are acceptable, not nylon warm up pants, cut offs, denim, or sweat pants.

GLOSSARY

Bank Shot

Where the ball is played toward or off a wall or backboard to gain the advantage point.

Bocce

Can also be spelled bocci or boccie. As with some other sports, e.g., basketball, this is a term of two meanings in that it can be the balls played with during the game or can mean the game itself.

Dead Ball

A ball that has been ruled, by the official, as a disqualified ball due to some form of infringement or technicality.

Doubles

A game played with teams of two players in opposing teams, sometimes called pairs or two-player team.

End

Also called a frame or round. A period of the game when all of the players have completed their turn and the points are awarded by the official, before the next "end" is played.

End Boards

The boards at the end of the court. Sometimes these are suspended from the back walls of the court, and on other occasions they may be a solid wall. Players can use these to gain the advantage/point.

Foul

Relates to either a foot foul or a line foul, sometimes also called a foot line foul. The type and frequency of the foul will determine the penalty dealt to the player. This is usually called when a player oversteps the foul line or releases the ball after crossing the foul line.

Foul Line

The lines on a court that the player must stay behind before the ball is released, when planning either type of delivery (pointing or hitting shot). The hitting/pointing line is 10 feet from the end board.

Fours

A game played between a team of four players against another team of four players, sometimes called teams or a four-player team.

Hitting

Also called spocking, popping or shooting. It is a shot usually planned to displace other balls around the target ball, rather than playing a slow gentle roll to gain the advantage point. The ball is usually played with such force as to reach the far end of the court. A player playing this type of shot may release the ball from anywhere up to the 10 foot hitting/pointing line.

Initial Point

The first ball rolled in an end toward the pallina to establish the initial point. If some form of foul is committed by the first ball played, the same team will roll the next ball to establish the initial point.

In

Also called the "in team". This is used to describe the team that has the advantage or holds the point. The team closest to the pallina is deemed the "in team" and will now want it's turn until the opposition gets closer, where upon the opposition becomes the "in team".

Live Ball

Can also be termed "good". The phrase is used to explain the players that the ball just rolled is a legitimate and legal ball and that the rest of the end can continue to be played. Consequently, if a foul is committed the ball is termed out or a dead ball.

Out

Also call the "out team". As an opposite to "in" described above, this term is used to describe who does not hold the advantage or point at the present position in the end. This team will continue to play until they get closer and subsequently become the "in team" or until they run out of balls to roll up.

Pairs

A game played between two players playing against another two players, sometimes called doubles or a two-player team.

Pallina

A 1 ¾ inch ball which is rolled down the court first.

Pallina Advantage

The team that holds the pallina advantage is the team that rolls the pallina down the court to start the end of game. After rolling the pallina, they then roll the first ball down to establish the initial point. The term "advantage" is given as this team can determine by the distance the pallina is rolled along the court, i.e. short end or long.

Pointing

Also call rolling or lagging. Unlike the hitting shot, this shot is played to get the ball close to the target ball, rather than trying to scatter the balls to displace other balls. This is a shot that is usually played with a soft smooth release and with finesse and a gentle motion. It is usually from a standing position rather than a running/moving one. Players must release the ball before crossing the hitting/pointing line.

Rule of Advantage

The option given to a team when the opposition has committed a foul. The team can then choose what their options are, given the current positions of the balls and the state of the game.

Sideboards

The boards that surround and enclose a court, usually at least 6-12 inches high in the middle, to stop the balls from leaving the court. The official height of the wall is three feet at the end boards and taller than the height of the bocce ball along the side walls.

Singles

A game played between two players, one-on-one, sometimes called a one-player team.

Teams

A game played between a team of four players against another team of four players, sometimes called Fours or a four-player team.

Unified

Where a two-player or four-player team is made up of an equal number of Special Olympics athletes and Unified Partner on the same team. The same number of balls are played by each member of the team from the same end of the court. The ability of the Unified Partner should always be similar to that of the Special Olympics athlete he/she is to partner with.