



Special Olympics

BOCCE COACHING GUIDE



Special Olympics

Planning a Bocce Training & Competition Season



Table of Contents

Goals	4
Season Planning	6
In Season Planning	8
Preparing for a Competition	8
Essential Components of Planning a Bocce Training Session	9
Principles of Effective Training Sessions	11
Sample Training Form	12
Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions	13
Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions	14
Sample Training Session	16
Selecting Team Members	17
Creating Meaningful Involvement in Unified Sports®	17
Bocce Skills Assessment	18
Bocce Skills Assessment Card	19
Daily Performance Record	21
Bocce Attire	22
Tournament Rules	22
Bocce Equipment	23
General Bocce Equipment List At-A-Glance	23



Goals

Realistic yet challenging goals for each athlete are important to the motivation of the athlete both at training and during competition. Goals establish and drive the action of both training and competition plans. Sport confidence in athletes helps to make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation. Please refer to the Principles of Coaching Section for additional information and exercises on goal setting.

Goal Setting

Setting goals is a joint effort involving the athlete and coach. The main features of goal setting include the following.

Structured into short-term, intermediate and long-term

- ♦ Stepping stones to success
- ♦ Must be accepted by the athlete
- ♦ Vary in difficulty - easy attainable to challenging
- ♦ Must be measurable

Long Term Goal

The athlete will acquire basic bocce skills, appropriate social behavior and functional knowledge of the rules necessary to participate successfully in bocce competitions.

Short Term Objectives

As mentioned before, the setting of short term goals should be athlete driven and athlete focused. Unless you have the athlete's drive, direction and commitment to any goals set, they may not be achieved as they may be your goals and not the athlete's.



Assessing Goals Checklist

1. Write a goal statement.
2. Does the goal sufficiently meet the athlete's needs?
3. Is the goal positively stated? If not, rewrite it.
4. Is the goal under the athlete's control in that it focuses on his/her needs and no one else's?
5. Is the goal an actual goal and not a result?
6. Is the goal important to the athlete so that he/she will want to work toward achieving it (and will have the time and energy to do it)?
7. How will this goal make the athlete's life different?
8. What barriers might the athlete encounter in working toward this goal?
9. What more does the athlete know?
10. What does the athlete need to learn how to do?
11. What risks does the athlete need to take?



Season Planning

As with all sports, the Special Olympics bocce coach develops a coaching philosophy. The coach's philosophy needs to be consistent with the Special Olympics philosophy, which is that quality training and opportunities for fair and equitable competition are guaranteed for each athlete. However, successful coaches include having fun along with acquiring sport-specific skills and knowledge in the program's objectives for the athletes on the team.

Developing a Seasonal Plan

Bocce would be considered a predominantly "non-winter" sport, as it is usually played outdoors. There is no reason, however, if you had the appropriate facilities and the weather allowed it, why bocce could not be played year-round. Once you have established a season when the most influential factor (the weather) is favorable, planning for the season can take place.

Other factors to take into account are:

- ♦ Availability of training venue
- ♦ Maintenance of training venue
- ♦ Transport needs
- ♦ Replacement equipment needed
- ♦ Number of volunteers available

Pre-training Planning

This can take place well before the season starts.

1. Pre-season training
 - ♦ Muscle toning, etc.
2. Confirmation of return of last year's athletes
 - ♦ Contact all players to confirm that they are returning this season.
3. Introduction to the sport for new athletes/volunteers/assistant coaches
 - ♦ Ensure that all administration requirements are carried out and that new participants know when and where training will start.
4. Train-the-trainers up-skilling where necessary
 - ♦ Identify any training needs of coaches and contact local coordinator to arrange.
5. Season's competitions and events
 - ♦ Look over the competitions and events that are planned for the year and identify ones that your squad will attend.
6. Minimum eight-week training planning dates set if necessary
 - ♦ Establish when you feel the season's training should commence, taking into account when the first competition occurs in relation to the initial starting date you have chosen.
7. Skills assessments carried out
 - ♦ Carry out appropriate skills assessments to identify up-skilling needs of players.
8. Meeting with all participants to share season's plans
 - ♦ Call a meeting of all participants (players/volunteers/coaches/parents/caregivers) and advise what your proposed season looks like and adjust if necessary.
9. Enjoy the season's activities.



Other things to consider

- ♦ Improve your knowledge of bocce and of coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities by attending as necessary a Special Olympics training school.
- ♦ Arrange for bocce facility that will accommodate your needs throughout the season.
- ♦ Arrange for equipment needs to include any adapted equipment if necessary.
- ♦ Recruit, orient and train volunteer assistant coaches.
- ♦ Coordinate transportation needs.
- ♦ Ensure that all athletes have been medically approved before the first practice.
- ♦ Obtain copies of medical and parental releases.
- ♦ Establish goals and develop a plan for the season.
- ♦ Establish and coordinate seasonal schedule, including league play, training practices, clinics and demonstrations, and confirm any planned dates for local, area, sectional, state, national and Unified Bocce competitions.
- ♦ Hold orientation for families, teachers and friends of athletes including Home Training Program.
- ♦ Establish procedures for recognizing each athlete's progress.
- ♦ Establish a seasonal budget.

Confirmation of Practice Schedule

Once your venue has been determined and assessed, you are ready to confirm your training and competition schedules. It is important to publish training and competition schedules to submit to the interested groups below. This can help generate community awareness for your Special Olympics bocce program.

- ♦ Facility representatives
- ♦ Local Special Olympics Program
- ♦ Volunteer coaches
- ♦ Athletes
- ♦ Families
- ♦ Media
- ♦ Management team members
- ♦ Officials

The training and competition schedule is not exclusive to the areas listed below.

- ♦ Dates
- ♦ Start and end times
- ♦ Registration and/or meeting areas
- ♦ Contact phone number at the facility
- ♦ Coaches' phone numbers



In Season Planning

- ♦ Use skills assessments to identify each athlete's skill level and to record each athlete's progress throughout the season.
- ♦ Design an eight-week training program.
- ♦ Plan and modify each session according to what needs to be accomplished.
- ♦ Emphasize conditioning as skill is learned.
- ♦ Develop skills by progressively increasing difficulty.

Preparing for a Competition

When taking an athlete or team to competition a coach should always ensure that the following occurs:

Before the competition

1. Athlete medicals are up to date.
2. Rules are understood by athletes and coaching staff.
3. Entry forms are completed correctly.
4. Athletes have appropriate team uniform or other suitable clothing.

At the competition

1. Athletes are registered and names are spelled correctly.
2. Athletes and coaching staff know the layout of the facility.
3. Athletes and coaching staff are aware of start times and numbers of playing courts.
4. Athletes arrive at their court prior to the start and have completed warm-ups, etc.
5. Athletes display appropriate court etiquette.
6. Athletes are given appropriate encouragement for effort and talent displayed.
7. Athletes follow a cool-down regime (this is a good time to evaluate the game just played).
8. Identify things that went well during play and things that may need to be worked on at the next practice.

After the competition

1. Athletes' families/caregivers are advised of the results of the competition.
2. Athletes' families/caregivers are advised of anything they need to be aware of following the day's event.
3. At next practice, re-evaluate the event and report results to those who didn't attend.



Essential Components of Planning a Bocce Training Session

Each training session should contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the following factors:

1. Goal of the training session. Ensure that everyone knows what the session's goals are and have had input into setting them.
2. The time of season the session is in. More skills practice is provided earlier in the season. In comparison, more competition experience is provided later in the season.
3. Skill level of your athletes. More practice of previously taught skills is needed for lower ability athletes.
4. Number of coaches. The more coaches present and the more quality one-to-one instruction offered, the more improvement seen.
5. Total amount of training time available. More time is spent on new skills in a 2-hour session than in a 90-minute session.

The following elements should be included in an athlete's daily training program. Please refer to the noted sections in each area for more in-depth information and guidance on these topics.

- ♦ Warm-ups
- ♦ Previously taught skills
- ♦ New skills
- ♦ Competition experience
- ♦ Feedback on performance

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the athlete is actually going to do. When planning a training session, remember that the progression through the key components of the session should allow for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

- ♦ Easy to difficult
- ♦ Slow to fast
- ♦ Known to unknown
- ♦ General to specific
- ♦ Start to finish

If you have decided to establish a bocce league, much of your training will revolve around each week's league sessions. Training can take place before, during and after league play. Before league play, you can work on teaching about equipment needed to play and have a warm-up period. During league play you can observe the athletes' actions and style, making comments regarding what they are doing incorrectly and praising them for what they do correctly, (i.e., "Way to follow through" or "Good judgment"). Instructions in scoring, the etiquette of bocce and sportsmanship can be also be accomplished. After league play, you can work on new skills or work with athletes on improving previously learned skills. A recommend training plan is outlined below.



Warm-up and Stretch (10-15 minutes)

Every athlete must participate in the warm-up and stretch period on or near the court (i.e., shadow body movements). Stretch each muscle group while waiting to practice rolling/bowling actions.

Skills Instruction (15-20 minutes)

- ♦ Quickly review previously taught skills.
- ♦ Introduce the theme of the skills activity.
- ♦ Demonstrate the skills simply and dramatically.
- ♦ Physically assist and prompt lower ability players when necessary.
- ♦ Introduce and practice new skills early in the practice session.

Competition Experience (One, two, or three games)

Athletes learn a lot by simply playing the game. The game is a great teacher.

Cool-down, Stretch and Review (10-15 minutes)

Every athlete should participate in a cool-down down period following a training session. The stretching of each muscle group should not be as vigorous as the warm-up. This is a good time to reflect on the good points of the training session, highlighting any progress various athletes have made, but remember not to do this at the detriment of other athletes who may not have achieved as much. Time can also be spent on areas where you may need to work during the next session. As well, announce any important notices, upcoming competitions, birthdays, social gatherings etc. You should always finish the training session, whether it was good or not so good, with some fun and laughter.



Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep all active	Athletes need to be active listeners.
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them.
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction.
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together.
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well.
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom.
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun; help keep it this way for you and your athletes.
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully. • Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it. • General to specific – this is why I am working so hard.
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively.
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities.



Sample Training Form

Date:		Location:		Time:	
Goals:					

Warm-up - Make the body ready for practice.

Leader	Activity	Equipment

Team Talk - Let the athletes know your expectations for practice.

Goals for Today	
Previous Skill Lesson	
New Skill Lesson	

Skill Development - Games and exercises to reinforce learning. Make it fun.

Leader	Activity	Equipment

Break - Supply water and take the skill into the scrimmage.

Reinforce Skill from Today:	
------------------------------------	--

Scrimmage - Emphasize last week's skill and new skill.

Previous Skill	
New Skill	

Team Talk - Emphasize new skill and techniques from scrimmage.

Scrimmage Lesson 1	
Scrimmage Lesson 2	
Review Last Week's Skill	
Review Homework	

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Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions

- Assign assistant coaches their roles and responsibilities in accordance to your training plan.
- When possible, have all equipment and stations prepared before the athletes arrive.
- Introduce and acknowledge coaches and athletes.
- Review intended program with everyone. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
- Alter the plan according to weather and the facility in order to accommodate the needs of the athletes.
- Change activities before the athletes become bored and lose interest.
- Keep drills and activities brief so athletes do not get bored. Keep everyone busy with an exercise even if it is rest.
- Devote the end of the practice to a group activity that can incorporate challenge and fun, always giving them something to look forward to at the end of practice.
- If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
- Summarize the session and announce arrangements for next session.
- Keep the **fun** in fundamentals.



Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of bocce. The safety and well-being of athletes are the coaches' primary concerns. Bocce is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

1. Establish clear rules for behavior at your first practice and enforce them.
2. When the weather is poor, have a plan to immediately remove athletes from inclement weather.
3. Make sure athletes bring water to every practice, especially in hotter climates.
4. Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
5. Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
6. Choose a safe field area. Do not practice in areas with rocks or holes that could cause injury. Simply telling players to avoid obstacles is not enough.
7. Walk the court and remove unsafe objects. Be particularly vigilant when you are playing in cluttered indoor gyms. Remove anything that a player might run into.
8. Check the bocce balls for cracks that could chip or split. Balls and may cause eye injury.
9. Check that the side and end walls are secured in the ground. Instruct players never to walk along the top of the court's walls. Pay particular attention to portable courts that tip over in a high wind or if players stand on them or a bocce ball rebounds off them. Make sure these walls are securely staked into the ground.
10. Review your first-aid and emergency procedures. Have someone who is trained in first-aid and CPR on or very near to the court during practice and games.
11. Ensure that athlete emergency contact details are up to date and close at hand during practices and games.
12. Warm-up/cool-down and stretch properly at the beginning/end of each practice to prevent muscle injuries.
13. Train to improve the general fitness level of your players. Physically fit players are less likely to get injured. Make your practices active.
14. Make sure that players are physically matched in games where players go against each other "head-to-head" (e.g. one-on-one drills).
15. Require all your players to wear appropriate attire, especially footwear, at practices and games.
16. Do not use yourself as a target, i.e. stand in front of athletes and instruct them to throw/roll the ball to you or your feet.
17. Ensure that you have easy access to a telephone or mobile phone.
18. When not in use, bocce balls should always remain on the ground, not tossed in the air or bounced in the hand. It should be remembered that bocce balls are heavy and may break, or otherwise injure, a toe or foot if dropped.
19. To avoid competitors slipping on bocce balls, balls should be placed in the rear corner of the court when not being used. Never leave bocce balls lying around the courts or training area where someone may stand on or trip over them.



Bocce Practice Competitions

The more we compete, the better we get. Part of the strategic plan for Special Olympics bocce is to drive more sport development at the local levels. Competition motivates athletes, coaches and the entire sport management team. Expand or add to your schedule as many competition opportunities as possible. We have provided a few suggestions below:

1. Host matches with adjacent local programs.
2. Ask the local high school if your athletes can compete with them as a practice match.
3. Join the local community bocce club and/or associations.
4. Host weekly all comer's meets for the area.
5. Create a bocce league or club in your community.
6. Incorporate competition components at the end of every training session.



Sample Training Session

Squad Name: _____

Date: _____ Venue:- _____

TRAINING OBJECTIVES FOR THIS SESSION	EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group balls in a cluster Group balls equidistant Show two different methods of delivery Talk about End of Year Dance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (20) cones (4) three-foot squares (2) full sets of bocce balls (30) skills sheets
NOTES/ INJURIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind athletes of dance Watch for Kylie's right shoulder Conrad's medical renewal due 	

TRAINING SESSION TIME PLANNER	
Time Allocated	Activity
2.00-5.00 Minutes	Welcome everyone, explain session plan and time frames
15 Minutes	Warm-ups and stretches
15 Minutes	Roll up and down sides of court (watch for stance)
15 Minutes	Toss up and down sides of court (watch for correct arm release)
5 Minutes	Break for drink of water and discuss findings from last two exercises
10 Minutes	Roll/Toss up and down sides of court (watch for improvements)
15 Minutes	Practice grouping of balls (watch for stance and release)
15 Minutes	Practice distance roll-ups (watch for stance and release)
15-20 Minutes	Fun game of groupings
15 Minutes	Cool-down and stretches; feedback from athletes re session
5 Minutes	Reminder notes re End of Year Dance & goodbyes
10 minutes discussion with assistant coaches on how they felt session went following training session	

TRAINING SESSION EVALUATION PLAN



Selecting Team Members

The key to the successful development of a traditional Special Olympics or Unified Sports® team is the proper selection of team members. We have provided some primary considerations for you below.

Ability Grouping

Bocce teams work best when all team members have similar sports skills. Partners with abilities that are far superior to other teammates will either control competition or accommodate others by not competing to their potential. In both situations, the goals of interaction and teamwork are diminished and a true competitive experience is not achieved.

Age Grouping

All team members should be closely matched in age.

- ♦ Within 3-5 years of age for athletes 21 years of age and under
- ♦ Within 10-15 years for athletes 22 years of age and over
- ♦ Team members may also be family members where age should be considered (parent and child/ sibling/ athlete)

For example, in bocce, an 8-year old should not be competing against or with a 30-year old athlete.

Creating Meaningful Involvement in Unified Sports®

Unified Sports® embraces the philosophy and principles of Special Olympics. When selecting your Unified team you want to achieve meaningful involvement at the beginning, during and end of your sport season. Unified teams are organized to provide meaningful involvement for all athletes and partners. Every teammate should play a role and have the opportunity to contribute to the team. Meaningful involvement also refers to the quality of interaction and competition within a Unified Sports® team. Achieving meaningful involvement by all teammates on the team ensures a positive and rewarding experience for everyone.

Indicators of Meaningful Involvement

- ♦ Teammates compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others.
- ♦ Teammates compete according to the rules of competition.
- ♦ Teammates have the ability and opportunity to contribute to the performance of the team.
- ♦ Teammates understand how to blend their skills with those of other athletes, resulting in improved performance by athletes with lesser ability.

Meaningful Involvement Is Not Achieved When Team Members

- ♦ Have superior sports skills in comparison to their fellow team members.
- ♦ Act as on field coaches, rather than teammates.
- ♦ Control most aspects of the competition during critical periods of the game.
- ♦ Do not train or practice regularly, and only show up on the day of competition.
- ♦ Lower their level of ability dramatically, so that they do not hurt others or control the entire game.



Bocce Skills Assessment

The sport skills assessment chart is a systematic method that is useful in determining the skill ability of an athlete. The Bocce Skills Assessment Card is designed to assist coaches in determining athletes' ability levels before they begin to participate. Coaches will find this assessment a useful tool for several reasons:

- ♦ Helps coach to determine with the athlete which events he/she will compete in
- ♦ Establishes the baseline training areas of the athlete
- ♦ Assists coaches to group athletes of similar ability on training teams
- ♦ Measures the athlete's progression
- ♦ Helps determine athlete's daily training schedule

Before administering the assessment, coaches need to perform the following analysis when observing the athlete.

- ♦ Become familiar with each of the tasks listed under the major skills.
- ♦ Have an accurate visual picture of each task.
- ♦ Have observed a skilled performer executing the skill.

When administering the assessment, coaches will have a better opportunity to get the best analysis from their athletes. Always begin by explaining the skill you would like to observe. When possible, demonstrate the skill.

Remember

The athlete's average score is the ultimate determining factor in how well the athlete is playing. Record the scores of each game, and determine an average for the number of games played. Appropriate skill level is determined by average. What you are looking for is an increase in the athlete's average from the start of training to the end of the training period. Remember, changes made to the way an athlete delivers a ball, or to their equipment, will often result in lower scores at first, as the athlete makes the necessary adjustments and becomes familiar with them.



Bocce Skills Assessment Card

Athlete's Name _____ **Date** _____
Coach's Name _____ **Date** _____

Instructions

- Use tool at the beginning of the training/competition season to establish a basis of the athlete's starting skill level.
- Have the athlete perform the skill several times.
- If the athlete performs the skill correctly three out of five times, check the box next to the skill to indicate that the skill has been accomplished.
- Incorporate program assessment sessions into your program.
- Athletes may accomplish skills in any order. Athletes have accomplished this list when all possible items have been achieved.

Layout of the Bocce Court

- Recognizes the 10-foot foul line
- Recognizes the 30-foot halfway line
- Recognizes the 50-foot line
- Recognizes the back boards
- Recognizes the side boards

Equipment Selection

- Recognizes a bocce ball
- Recognizes the color differences of the bocce balls
- Recognizes the pallina
- Recognizes the tape measure
- Recognizes the flags used (especially for athletes with visual or hearing impairments)
- Can associate the connection between flag color and bocce ball

Scoring

- Understands the point scoring system used in the game of bocce
- Understands that winning score for both singles and two-player teams is 12 points
- Understands that winning score for four-player teams is 16 points
- Recognizes the scores on a score card
- Can follow the scoring on a score card
- Recognizes the places for the various signatures on a score card
- Recognizes the need to not sign a score card if the game is to be protested

Rules of the Game

- Shows an understanding of the game
- Understands that the game consists of playing to a certain number of points
- Knows what each of the lines on the court means
- Knows not to cross the foul line when delivering a ball
- Knows to play four balls when playing singles
- Knows to play two balls when playing doubles/pairs
- Knows to play one ball when in a team of four
- Knows to play only when indicated by the official
- Adheres to the rules of the bocce court and training area
- Follows official Special Olympics bocce rules



Sportsmanship/Etiquette

- Exhibits sportsmanship and etiquette at all times
- Demonstrates competitive effort while playing at all times
- Takes turns with other team members
- Selects and uses the same-color balls throughout the game
- Waits for official to indicate his/her turn to play
- Plays cooperatively and competitively, cheers on fellow teammates
- Maintains knowledge of own/own team's score
- Listens to coaches' instructions

Game Terminology

- Recognizes the terms "In" and "Out" team
- Recognizes the term "Foul"
- Recognizes the term "Pointing"
- Recognizes the term "Hitting"
- Recognizes the term "Banking"
- Recognizes the term "Rebounding"

Retrieving the Ball

- Collects ball from back of court
- Identifies own ball by the color
- Picks up ball and brings to waist level
- Supports the ball with non-rolling hand and moves to the starting position

Grip

- Places fingers and thumb evenly around the ball
- Uses thumb to hold ball in place
- Holds ball in front portion of hand

Stance

- Locates starting position back from the foul line
- Stands with feet shoulder-width apart
- Holds shoulders level and body square to target with weight evenly distributed
- Demonstrates proper foot placement: left foot forward if right-handed.
- Assumes correct stance with eyes focused on pallina or target ball
- Holds ball under control

Delivery

- Pushes the ball forward to approximately eye level followed by a downward swing
- Brings arm straight back and close to body
- Brings arm straight forward to release ball
- Delivers ball with a gentle slow release for a pointing shot
- Delivers ball with a strong fast release for a hitting shot
- Performs standing pointing delivery
- Performs running pointing delivery
- Performs standing hitting delivery
- Performs running hitting delivery

Release

- Assumes correct stance with front foot behind the foul line and shoulders square to the target
- Delivers ball over the foul line toward the pallina or target
- Maintains correct wrist posture once ball leaves hand
- Executes proper follow-through with arm swing: forward and upward



Daily Performance Record

The Daily Performance Record is designed to keep an accurate record of the athlete's daily performance as he/she learns a sports skill. There are several reasons why the coach can benefit from using the Daily Performance Record:

- ♦ The record becomes a permanent document of the athlete's progress.
- ♦ The record helps the coach establish measurable consistency in the athlete's training program.
- ♦ The record allows the coach to be flexible during the actual teaching and coaching session because he/she can break down the skills into specific, smaller tasks that meet the individual needs of each athlete.
- ♦ The record helps the coach choose proper skill-teaching methods, correct conditions and criteria for evaluating the athlete's performance of the skills.

Using the Daily Performance Record

At the top of the record, the coach enters his/her name and the athlete's name and bocce event. If more than one coach works with an athlete, they should enter the dates that they work with the athlete next to their names.

Before the training session begins, the coach decides what skills will be covered. The coach makes this decision based on the athlete's age, interests and mental and physical abilities. The skill needs to be a statement or a description of the specific exercise that the athlete must perform. The coach enters the skill on the top line of the left-hand column. Each subsequent skill is entered after the athlete masters the previous skill. Of course, more than one sheet may be used to record all of the skills involved. Also, if the athlete cannot perform a prescribed skill, the coach may break down the skill into smaller tasks that will allow for the athlete's success at the new skill.

Conditions and Criteria for Mastering

After the coach enters the skill, he/she must then decide on the conditions and criteria by which the athlete must master the skill. Conditions are special circumstances that define the manner in which the athlete must perform a skill. For example, "given a demonstration, and with assistance." The coach needs to always operate under the assumption that the ultimate conditions in which the athlete masters a skill are, "upon command and without assistance" and, therefore, does not have to enter these conditions in the record next to the skill entry. Ideally, the coach needs to arrange the skills and conditions such that the athlete gradually learns to perform the skill upon command and without assistance.

Criteria are the standards that determine how well the skill must be performed. The coach needs to determine a standard that realistically suits the athlete's mental and physical abilities. Given the varied nature of skills, the criteria might involve many different types of standards, such as amount of time, number of repetitions, accuracy, distance or speed.

Dates of Sessions and Levels of Instruction Used

The coach may work on one task for a couple of days, and may use several methods of instruction during that time to progress to the point where the athlete performs the task upon command and without assistance. To establish a consistent curriculum for the athlete, the coach must record the dates he works on particular tasks and must enter the methods of instruction that were used on those dates.



Bocce Attire

Appropriate bocce attire is required for all competitors. As coach, you should discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. For example, long pant jeans to blue jean shorts are not proper bocce attire for any event. Explain that athletes cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. Take athletes to high school or collegiate training sessions or competitions and point out the attire being worn. You can even set the example, by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions and not rewarding athletes who do not come properly dressed to train and/or compete.

- ♦ The athlete should always wear comfortable clothing.
- ♦ Clothes should always allow freedom of movement of all parts of the body.
- ♦ Regular school clothes are acceptable.
- ♦ In a tournament, white or light colored clothes are preferred.
- ♦ Players are not permitted to wear shoes which may damage or disrupt the court surface.
- ♦ Players are not permitted to play without shoes. Jandals and sandals should also be avoided as they provide little or no protection if a ball is dropped onto the foot.
- ♦ Players should be advised of the need for sun screen, hats and other protection from the sun's rays.

Tournament Rules

These state that:

- ♦ Players will dress in a manner which will bring credit to them and the sport of bocce.
- ♦ Players will not be permitted to wear shoes which may damage or disrupt the court surface. Also, players will not be permitted to play without shoes.
- ♦ Players wearing objectionable or offensive clothing, or who are improperly attired, may not be allowed to participate in a tournament.



Bocce Equipment

Bocce requires the type of sporting equipment listed below. It is important for athletes to be able to recognize and understand how equipment for the specific events works and impacts their performance. Have your athletes name each piece of equipment as you show it and give the use for each. To reinforce this ability within them, have them select the equipment used for their events as well.

- ♦ Bocce balls
- ♦ Pallina
- ♦ Metric measuring device
- ♦ Flags
- ♦ Scoring device

General Bocce Equipment List At-A-Glance

<p>Bocce balls</p> 	<p>May be manufactured of wood or a composition material and of equal size. Official Tournament ball sizes may be from 107 millimeters (4.2 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.</p>
<p>Pallina</p> 	<p>Must not 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 bocce ball colors. Sometimes beneficial to be distinct from the color of the court surface.</p>
<p>Metric Measuring device</p>	<p>May be any device that has the capacity of accurately measuring the distance between two objects, and acceptable to tournament officials.</p>
<p>Flags</p>	<p>May be any device that has the ability to represent the colors of the bocce balls being used, and acceptable to tournament officials.</p> <p>Should also be large enough to be clearly visible at least 50 feet away.</p>
<p>Scoring device</p>	<p>May be any device that has the capability to record the score during play, and acceptable to tournament officials.</p>



Special Olympics

Teaching Bocce Skills



Table of Contents

The Warm-up	27
The Cool-down	28
Bocce Concepts and Strategies	31
Pointing	31
Hitting	31
Throw Away	31
Banking or Rebounding	31
Two Basic Shots	31
Understanding the Game	32
Basics and Aim of the Game of Bocce	32
Physical and Social Benefits of Bocce	32
Bocce Individual Skills	33
The Grip	33
Teaching the Event	33
Holding a Bocce Ball	33
Faults & Fixes Chart	35
Coaches' Tips: The Grip – At-A-Glance	35
The Stance	36
Teaching the Event	36
Faults & Fixes Chart	38
Coaches' Tips: The Stance – At-A-Glance	39
The Pointing Shot	40
Teaching the Event	40
Faults & Fixes Chart	42
Coaches' Tips: Pointing – At-A-Glance	43
The Hitting/Spocking Shot	44
Teaching the Event	44
Faults & Fixes Chart	45
Coaches' Tips: Hitting/Spocking – At-A-Glance	46
The Bocce Court	47
Event-specific Drills	49
Ball Pick Ups	49
Forward Step and Rock Backs	49
Arm Swing	49
Skill Progression- Recognition of Equipment Used	50
Skill Progression- Recognition of Playing Field	50
Skill Progression- Recognition of Playing Terms	50
Skill Progression- Pointing (Stepping Release)	51
Skill Progression- Hitting	52
Skill Progression- Rebounding/Banking	52
Skill Progression- Recognition of Scoring Process and Terms	53
Skill Progression- Recognition of Sportsmanship and Etiquette	53
Bocce Specific Drills	54
Distance Rolling	54
Key Words	55
Directional Rolling	56
Roll to a Designated Area of the Court	58
Tossing to a Designated Area of the Court	60



Sample Workouts	62
Modifications and Adaptations	65
Modifications	65
Adaptations	65
Mental Preparation and Training	67
Cross Training in Bocce	68
Sample Cross Training Exercises	68
Home Training Program	70



The Warm-up

A warm-up period is the first part of every training session or preparation for competition. The warm-up starts slowly and systematically and gradually involves all muscles and body parts to prepare the athlete for training and competition. In addition to preparing the athlete mentally, warming up also has several physiological benefits.

1. Raises body temperature
2. Increases metabolic rate
3. Increases heart and respiratory rate
4. Prepares the muscles and nervous system for exercise

The warm-up is tailored for the activity to follow. Warm-ups consist of active motion leading up to more vigorous motion to elevate heart, respiratory and metabolic rates. The total warm-up period takes at least 25 minutes and immediately precedes the training or competition. A warm-up period will include the following basic sequence and components.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic walk/jog	Heats muscles	5 minutes
Stretching	Increases range of movement	10 minutes
Event Specific Drills	Coordination preparation for training/competition	10 minutes

Walking

Walking is the first exercise of an athlete's routine. Athletes begin warming the muscles by walking slowly for 3-5 minutes. This circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching. The sole objective of the walking warm-up is to circulate the blood and warm the muscles in preparation for more strenuous activity.

Jogging

Jogging is the next exercise of an athlete's routine. Athletes begin warming the muscles by jogging slowly for 3-5 minutes. This circulates the blood through all the muscles, thus providing them greater flexibility for stretching. A jog should start out slowly and then gradually increase in speed to its completion; however, the athlete should never reach even 50 percent of his/her maximum effort by the end of the jog. Remember, the sole objective of this phase of the warm-up is circulating the blood and warming the muscles.

Stretching

Stretching is one of the most critical parts of the warm-up and an athlete's performance. A more flexible muscle is a stronger and healthier muscle. A stronger and healthier muscle responds better to exercise and activities and helps prevent athlete injury. Please refer to the Stretching within this section for more in-depth information.

Event-specific Drills

Drills are progressions of learning that start at a low ability level, advance to an intermediate level, and finally, reach a high ability level. Encourage each athlete to advance to his/her highest possible level.

Kinesthetic movements are reinforced through repetitions of a small segment of the skill to be performed. Many times, the actions are exaggerated in order to strengthen the muscles that perform the skill. Each coaching session should take the athlete through the entire progression so that he/she is exposed to the total of all of the skills that make up an event.

Five important things to remember when doing these stretches is to:

1. Always do them when you have first warmed your body.
2. Always do them slowly.
3. Never over stretch.
4. Never over strain.



5. Always allow enough time to do justice to each group but allow more time for your shoulders/lower back and legs as these groups will be the most used group during play.

As you go through each muscle group, remember to explain to your athletes what each exercise is doing to each of the muscles you are working on. A good suggestion is to do the stretches in a specific order. The following example starts from the ground and works its way up each muscle group. By following this pattern, athletes become aware as to what stretches are next and can then be involved in future stretching sessions, by either leading or by telling you what muscle groups are next.

Specific Warm-up Stretching Exercises

Perform ankle stretch exercise

- (a) Stand with feet slightly apart
- (b) Lift one leg slightly off ground
- (c) Rotate ankle clockwise
- (d) Repeat rotation for about 5-10 seconds
- (e) Repeat with other ankle
- (f) Repeat set twice

Perform calf muscle stretch exercise

- (a) Stand with feet slightly apart
- (b) Step forward, leaving back foot firmly on ground
- (c) Lean forward slightly, taking your weight onto front leg
- (d) Hold for 10-15 seconds
- (e) Repeat with other leg
- (f) Repeat set twice

Perform upper thigh/lower back stretch exercise

- (a) Stand with legs straight and ankles crossed over
- (b) Bend forward from the hips
- (c) Slide hands down front of leg as far as you can go
- (d) Hold for 10-15 seconds
- (e) Return to starting position
- (f) Re-cross ankles with other ankle at front
- (g) Repeat exercise
- (h) Repeat set twice

Perform side torso bend exercise

- (a) Stand with feet slightly apart and arms at sides
- (b) Extend arms down sides slowly and hold
- (c) Bend from waist and keep your shoulders back
- (d) Return to starting position
- (e) Repeat exercise on opposite side
- (f) Repeat set twice

Perform shoulder stretch exercise

- (a) Stand with feet slightly apart
- (b) Keeping your back straight, extend arms out from your sides
- (c) Rotate both arms in circular/windmill motion
- (d) Continue for 10-15 seconds
- (e) Repeat exercise in reverse swinging motion

Remember: this can also be a good time to talk through some of the goals for the session and repeat any important messages from last week's session



The Cool-down

The cool-down is as important as the warm-up; however, it is often ignored. Abruptly stopping an activity may cause pooling of the blood and slow the removal of waste products in the athlete's body. It may also cause cramps, soreness and other problems for Special Olympics athletes. The cool-down gradually reduces the body temperature and heart rate and speeds the recovery process before the next training session or competitive experience. The cool-down is also a good time for the coach and athlete to talk about the session or competition.

Activity	Purpose	Time (minimum)
Slow aerobic walk/jog	Lowers body temperature Gradually reduces heart rate	5 minutes
Light stretching	Removes waste from muscles	5 minutes

Specific Cool-down Stretching Exercises

Perform ankle stretch exercise

- (a) Stand with feet slightly apart
- (b) Lift one leg slightly off ground
- (c) Rotate ankle clockwise
- (d) Repeat rotation for about 5-10 seconds
- (e) Repeat with other ankle

Perform calf muscle stretch exercise

- (a) Stand with feet slightly apart
- (b) Step forward, leaving back foot firmly on ground
- (c) Lean forward slightly taking your weight onto front leg
- (d) Hold for 10-15 seconds
- (e) Repeat with other leg

Perform upper thigh/lower back stretch exercise

- (a) Stand with legs straight and ankles crossed over
- (b) Bend forward from the hips
- (c) Slide hands down front of leg as far as you can go
- (d) Hold for 10-15 seconds
- (e) Return to starting position
- (f) Re-cross ankles with other ankle at front
- (g) Repeat exercise



Perform side torso bend exercise

- (a) Stand with feet slightly apart and arms at sides
- (b) Extend arms down sides slowly and hold
- (c) Bend from waist and keep your shoulders back
- (d) Return to starting position
- (e) Repeat exercise on opposite side

Perform shoulder stretch exercise

- (a) Stand with feet slightly apart
- (b) Keeping your back straight, extend arms out from your sides
- (c) Rotate both arms in circular/windmill motion
- (d) Continue for 10-15 seconds
- (e) Repeat exercise in reverse swinging motion

These end-of-session stretches can be a good time to reflect on any important things that came out of the day's session as well as remind athletes of any important information. You can also use this time to congratulate any outstanding achievements or progressions made by any athletes.



Bocce Concepts and Strategies

Pointing

This concept is used when describing the need for an athlete to attempt to gain the “point” or increase the number of “points” his/her team already holds. This is possibly the most commonly used shot played on a bocce court.

Hitting

This concept is used when describing the need for an athlete to attempt to disturb the head (?) and lessen the number of “points” his/her team is down.

Throw Away

This concept is used when a team may already be holding a “point” and, rather than try to play a shot and possibly then lose the advantage, a player may just drop the bocce ball in front of his/herself and hence “throw away” the ball.

Banking or Rebounding

This concept is used when an athlete may need to roll a bocce ball toward a side wall and have the ball ricochet off the wall. It would usually allow a player to play around another ball whether that ball is his/her own or the opposing team’s. This maneuver can be used to gain more points or lessen the number the opposition is holding at the time. An athlete would need to be made aware of angles.

Two Basic Shots

The Pointing Shot

This bocce shot is played more as a gentle smooth shot. It is generally rolled, as opposed to being thrown/tossed, and is used to either gain a point or increase the number of points already held. This is in contrast to trying to displace other balls through a forceful delivery.

The Hitting or Spocking Shot

The hitting or spocking shot is played more as a powerful shot. It is rolled or tossed/thrown with great force to displace a ball or balls to either gain the point by displacing the opponent’s ball/s or reduce the number of points the opponent is holding. This is in contrast to trying to get your ball closer through a slow gentle roll-up.

Coaching Tips

- Each of the above two shots can be used at various stages of a game or even various stages of a frame.
- While some athletes may never attempt some of the shots mentioned, this is no reason why they should not be made aware of them
- Safety of both coaches and athletes should always be paramount during all training and competition settings



Understanding the Game

Do not assume that lower ability players will know even the basic aim of the game. Such players may have difficulty with simple concepts such as distinguishing between teammates and opponents.

Basics and Aim of the Game of Bocce

Bocce is played with a set of eight large balls and one small target ball called a pallina (Italian for little ball). The pallina is sometimes also called a jack, kitty, cue ball or pill. The larger balls are roughly 107mm in diameter and weigh approximately 900 grams. Each of the opposing team's balls are of two distinct different colors, and sometimes markings. The different markings assist people who may have a visual impairment and require touch to differentiate balls.

Events are usually singles, doubles or teams (any more on a court can lead to overcrowding). A game is begun by the toss of a coin to establish who goes first. Once the initial toss has been made, the pallina and the first ball of that team is rolled. The opposition will then roll their first ball down the court and hope that they get closer to the pallina.

If the opposition is successful in their attempt, the first team will try and better it again. If they are not successful, they will continue to try until they achieve their goal or have rolled all their balls. Each team gets to roll or toss their four larger Bocce balls towards the pallina.

The object of the game is to get as many of your balls as close to the target ball as your opponent. After both teams have thrown all their balls, the frame has ended and the distances between the Pallina and the Bocce balls are considered and points awarded. Only one team can score in each frame or end. Scoring is one point for each ball that is closer to the pallina than the opponents balls. In this way you can score up to four points in each frame or end.

Competition games are usually scored up to 12 or 16 points per game; however, scoring in recreational games is limited only by the time players have to spare. It can be from three or four ends to nearly 30, depending on the number of points awarded following completion of each end. Depending on the skill of the players, a game can last anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour.

Physical and Social Benefits of Bocce

Even when played on official courts, bocce is not a physically demanding sport. There is no pounding on the spine and knees as in basketball, no sprinting and sliding as in athletics or softball.

You don't have to be in shape to play bocce, though physical fitness controls the fatigue factor in any competitive sport. On the other hand, the mental and social benefits of bocce are incalculable. Competing in any sport fosters a healthy outlook on life. And after all things are considered, bocce meets today's health and fitness standard of favoring lifetime sports over those that you can enjoy only in your youth.

There are also the social mainstreaming benefits that occur when the "playing field" is level, in that this game does not require a vast amount of intellectual acumen for a player to be at the top level of the sport. Therefore a person with a disability can compete on an even basis against a competitor who has no impairment.



Bocce Individual Skills

The Grip

In order to be able to roll or toss a bocce ball, an athlete must first understand what the feeling is like to grip the bocce ball correctly.

Athlete Readiness

- Athlete is able to hold bocce ball snugly in the hand.
- Athlete is able to have full control of the bocce ball while it is in the hand.

Teaching the Event

Holding a Bocce Ball

- ◆ Pick up and bring to waist level.
- ◆ Ensure ball is sitting in the palm of your hand.
- ◆ Ensure fingers are spread evenly across bottom of ball.
- ◆ Thumb is used to hold ball in place, not as a pressure point .
- ◆ Slightly close all fingers evenly around ball.

Please note that the ball can also be held in inverted position, although this is not entirely suitable for players with small hands.



Teaching Points

- ◆ Make sure the player identifies his/her ball by the color.
- ◆ Make sure the player has control over the weight/size of ball.
- ◆ While the athlete is holding the ball, look at spread of fingers underneath the bocce ball.
- ◆ Ensure ball is sitting on front portion of hand rather than nearly the back, by wrist.

As a test to see if an athlete is ready to play with an inverted grip, ask the athlete to invert his/her hand, with a ball held in it, to ensure the ball is sitting securely and doesn't drop from hand.





Coaching Tips

- Emphasize that the hand controls the ball's direction, speed and distance, so it is important that the ball is held correctly to ensure a good result.
- You may have to help the athlete who has smaller hands and may not be able to grip the ball correctly and therefore has little/no control of the bocce ball.



Faults & Fixes Chart

<i>Error</i>	<i>Correction</i>	<i>Drill/Test Reference</i>
Ball is sitting too far back in hand.	Have athlete pick up the ball with the fingertips and then invert the hand, without letting the ball roll to the back of the hand.	Have athlete practice picking up ball and holding in correct forward position; otherwise change to smaller sized balls.
Ball is falling out of athlete's hand when the hand is inverted.	Suggest the athlete does not use this type of delivery.	Encourage the use of smaller sized balls for all types of delivery.

Coaches' Tips: The Grip – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. The non-rolling hand is used to assist the athlete to hold the ball by providing support while the athlete prepares to play the shot.
2. Avoid progression too quickly to an inverted held shot.
3. The key is control over the bocce ball.
4. Use the thumb as a guide, not a pressure point.



The Stance

In order to be able to roll or toss a bocce ball, an athlete must first understand what the feeling is like to stand correctly when delivering the ball. It is important that the athlete has a good, evenly balanced base to start from.

Athlete Readiness

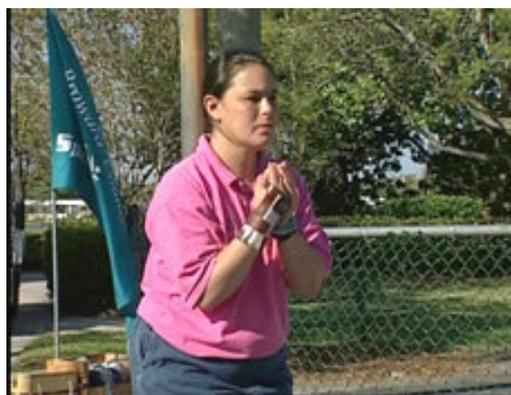
- Athlete is able to stand with weight evenly distributed through both legs.
- Athlete has a good solid base to prepare to deliver the bocce ball.
- If playing with a one-step delivery, ensure the step is not too large or narrow.

Teaching the Event

Delivery from a Standing Position

Stance

- ◆ Spread feet slightly apart, the width of your shoulders.
- ◆ Ensure that you hold the shoulders level and the body square to target, with weight evenly distributed.
- ◆ Take one step forward before moving arms.
- ◆ The one step forward should be on the opposite leg to the arm with which you will roll, i.e a right-handed athlete steps with the left foot forward.
- ◆ Ensure the step is not too large.
- ◆ Nor is it too narrow, slightly narrower than shoulder width .
- ◆ Bend knee slightly to encourage relaxation.
- ◆ Ensure your feet are pointing toward the target.
- ◆ And remember to always focus your eyes on the target.



Delivery and Release

- ◆ Push the ball forward to approximately eye level followed by a downward swing.
- ◆ Bring your arm straight back, close to your body.
- ◆ Keep your elbow straight and take your weight mainly on the back foot.
- ◆ As you smoothly bring your arm straight forward, transfer your weight to your front foot.
- ◆ As your arm passes close to your leg, your weight should be balanced between both feet.
- ◆ Release ball onto the court surface just in front of you.
- ◆ Continue moving hand forward and upward in a natural follow-through motion.
- ◆ Keep front foot behind the foul line and shoulders square to the target.

This stance is taken when delivering the ball in a tossing motion as well as a rolling motion.



Delivery from a Stepping Position

Stance

- ◆ Spread feet slightly apart, the width of the shoulders.
- ◆ Ensure that you hold your shoulders level and body square to target with weight evenly distributed.
- ◆ Take one step forward as delivery arm begins moving .
- ◆ The one step forward should be on the opposite leg to the arm with which you will roll,. i.e. a right handed athlete steps with the left foot forward.
- ◆ Ensure the step is not too large.
- ◆ Nor is it too narrow, slightly narrower than shoulder width.
- ◆ Ensure your feet are pointing toward the target.
- ◆ And remember to always focus your eyes on the target.



Delivery and Release

- ◆ As you begin to take the first step, push the ball forward to approximately eye level followed by a downward swing.
- ◆ Bring your arm straight back, close to your body,
- ◆ Keep your elbow straight and take your weight mainly on the back foot,
- ◆ When the ball is at its peak on the backswing, the front foot should be firmly planted to give the maximum balance.
- ◆ As you smoothly bring your arm straight forward, transfer your weight to your front foot.
- ◆ As your arm passes close to your leg, your weight should be balanced between both feet.
- ◆ Release ball onto the court surface just in front of you.
- ◆ Continue moving hand forward and upward in a natural follow-through motion.
- ◆ Keep front foot behind the foul line and shoulders square to the target.



This stance is taken when delivering the ball in a tossing motion as well as a rolling motion.

Teaching Points

- To encourage proper foot placement, a mat with footprints may be used with the beginners. As the player becomes used to the proper position, remove the mat.
- Stand behind the athlete and help him/her to stand straight on to the target.
- Ensure player is facing directly at the target throughout the entire movement.
- Ensure athlete keeps the head as still as possible throughout delivery.
- Adjust player's shoulders square to the target.



Key Words

- Ball ready
- Knees slightly bent
- Look at your target
- Shoulders slightly forward
- Begin back swing
- Step forward
- Ball at peak behind you
- Foot firmly on ground for good balance
- Smoothly bring arm forward
- Follow through toward target and upward

Coaching Tips

- Here the emphasis is to have a good wide balance during whole movement of delivering the bocce ball .
- You may have to help the athlete not to overstep, i.e. step too far forward or step to a too-narrow base.

Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Athlete steps too far forward.	The athlete's step should be no greater than his/her normal stride when walking.	Have athlete stand in the starting position facing the side of the court, then have him/her turn to face down the court. The length of the stride should be only slightly bigger.
Athlete keeps stepping to the side after delivery stride is taken.	The athlete needs to have a wider stance. He/she is falling to one side as his/her base for balance is too narrow.	Ask athlete to take the proper stance, and gently push his/her shoulders to the side. To avoid falling away to the side, have him/her take a wider stance and repeat to show difference.



Coaches' Tips: The Stance – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. Ensure the athlete always delivers the bocce ball back from the foul line.
2. Watch the distance of the feet at the start of both delivery movements. It should only be shoulder width apart; any more is too much.
3. Practice how far an appropriate stepping distance is for each athlete and ensure they start at least that far back from the foul line each time.
4. Initially have athletes start their step from the back of the court. This way it would be impossible for them to go over the foul line with one stride.
5. Whether using the delivery from a standing position or a stepping position, the head should be kept as still as possible throughout the movement.
6. Hand, arm and shoulder follow through in a straight line with target. After the ball has left the athlete's hand, have his/her follow through so that the elbow passes to the position directly above the head.



The Pointing Shot

This bocce shot is played more as a gentle smooth shot. It is generally rolled, as opposed to being thrown/tossed, and is used to either gain a point or increase the number of points already held. This is in contrast to trying to displace other balls through a forceful delivery.

Learn the difference between delivering a pointing shot from a standing position and that played with a running motion.

Athlete Readiness

- Athlete is able to use smooth arm action throughout delivery of the bocce ball.
- Athlete understands concept and strategy of playing a slower, more smoothly released shot.

Teaching the Event

Standing position

Stance

- ◆ The athlete spreads the feet slightly apart, the width of the shoulders.
- ◆ Take one step forward on the opposite leg to the arm with which the athlete rolls, i.e. a right-handed athlete steps with the left foot forward.
- ◆ Ensure the feet are pointing toward the target. And remind athletes that they should always focus their eyes on the target or target area.

Delivery

- ◆ Push the ball forward to approximately eye level followed by a downward swing.
- ◆ Have athlete bring his/her arm straight back, close to the body.
- ◆ Remind him/her to keep the elbow straight and take the weight mainly on the back foot.
- ◆ As he/she smoothly brings the arm straight forward, he/she should transfer the weight to the front foot.
- ◆ As the arm passes close to the leg, the weight should be balanced between both feet.

Release

- ◆ Have athlete release the ball onto the court surface just in front of him/herself.
- ◆ Continue moving the hand forward and upward in a natural follow-through motion.
- ◆ Remind him/her to keep the front foot behind the foul line and shoulders square to the target at all times.

This shot can also be played with a tossing motion, although it is not as commonly used with this action.

Teaching Points

This shot is played with the same motion as the hitting shot except that it is played with less force.



Stand behind the athlete

- While the ball is waist high, put the athlete's hands underneath the ball and push it up and out to eye level.
- With athlete's right hand underneath the ball, take the athlete's right hand, with the ball in it, and make a downward swing.
- At the same time, extend the athlete's left arm outward for balance.
- The athlete is standing in the back swing position with the arm extended.
- With the right hand, the athlete supports the ball from underneath and starts a forward motion of the ball.
- Remind the athlete throughout the entire movement that this is a slow gentle release as opposed to a strong fast release.

Stand beside the athlete

- Have the athlete swing the ball forward and ensure the ball is being released in a smooth motion. If not, with your right hand, force the ball loose from the grip so that it goes forward.
- Remind the athlete that the speed of the follow-through should not be fast.

Stand behind the athlete

- After release of the ball, place right hand on the athlete's right hand and wrist.
- Move his/her arm upward so that his/her arm is parallel to the ground.
- At the same time, with your leg, slide the athlete's left leg forward so that it stops before the foul line. Adjust athlete's shoulders square to the target.

Key Words

- Ball out and down
- Remember smooth and gentle release
- Knee slightly bent
- Look at your target
- Shoulders square to the target
- Shoulders slightly forward
- Begin back swing
- Smooth step forward
- Remember, smoothly bring arm forward
- Follow through toward target and upward

Coaching Tips

- Here the emphasis is to deliver the bocce ball with a smooth gentle release so as to gain a point or improve on the current lie of the play. It is not a quick, fast and forceful movement like the "Hitting Shot". For the athlete to establish good smooth speed throughout the whole movement, he/she may benefit from counting at stages throughout the delivery.
- You may have to help the athlete not only with the initial forward swing, but with the back swing and slow, smooth forward action with follow-through to target.



Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Ball is traveling too fast along the court.	Have athlete count from start to finish through whole movement.	Have athlete practice slow gentle releases to short distance targets.
Ball is not traveling as far as it needs to along the court.	Hold athlete's arm at top of back swing and have him/her pull against your force and also count.	Have athlete practice slow gentle releases to long distance targets, varying distances.
Arm is not passing close to the body.	Place a towel under athlete's armpit throughout movement.	Arm Wall Swings will assist muscle memory and let the athlete feel how the arm should flow and the path it should take.
Wrist is turning at release.	Have athlete practice with a piece of paper in hand and try and obtain Wrist Flicks.	Have athlete practice Wrist Flicks drill and also pitch a softball underhand back and forth to a friend.



Coaches' Tips: Pointing – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. When holding the ball at side, have athlete count throughout the entire delivery movement. This will help prepare the athlete for learning the flow and speed of the delivery.
 - ◆ If the athlete has too much back swing, a handkerchief/towel placed under the armpit of the rolling arm may help correct the problem. On a proper back swing, the handkerchief remains in place and does not fall out.
 - ◆ “One” - ball swings forward
 - ◆ “Two” - ball swings back
 - ◆ “Three ” - smooth forward swing of arm
 - ◆ “Four” - and released ball up the court
2. Tell the athlete, “Do not apply too much muscle power to the swing; just let the weight of the ball carry it back and then come straight forward.”
3. Talk the athlete through the delivery. Count together until he/she learns the speed of the count and its relationship to the speed of the body movement.
4. Once the athlete begins to use the proper movement from a standing position and wants to progress to a running pointing shot, have the athlete get into an approach rhythm and count steps. Count “1” for 1st step and ball moves forward, “2” for 2nd step and ball moves back, “3” for 3rd step and ball comes forward, “4” for 4th step and “release the ball.” Do this without a ball a few times, increasing the speed of action each time. Repeat after a few times using a ball.
5. Stand behind the athlete, counting the steps while the athlete performs the steps. After a few times, let the athlete practice on his/her own. Remember to have him/her count the steps out loud.
6. To get the athlete to release the ball before stepping over the foul line, place a towel or small piece of rope from one side of the court to the other over the foul line and tell the athlete to throw the ball out over the towel/rope.
7. Position of arm and hand on the follow-through can be demonstrated by taking a towel and putting a knot in it. Give the towel to the athlete and then back away. Have the athlete do a one-step delivery, throwing the towel to you and using your stomach as the target. Watch the follow-through: The athlete should have his/her right arm extended with the right hand pointing at your stomach and the wrist pointing up. Explain that this is the same motion to use when rolling a bocce ball.
8. A home training method is to have athlete and a friend practice pitching a softball underhanded back and forth to each other. The same motion is used to deliver the bocce ball. After the pitch, look at the position of the arm, hand, and thumb.
9. Correct athlete if rolling hand finishes across and in front of the body.
10. Hand, arm and shoulder follow through in a straight line with target. After the ball has left the athlete’s hand, have him/her follow through so that the elbow passes to the position directly above the head.



The Hitting/Spocking Shot

The hitting or spocking shot is played more as a powerful shot. It is rolled/thrown with great force to displace the ball/s to either gain the point by displacing the opponent's ball/s or reduce the number of points the opponent is holding. This is in contrast to trying to get your ball closer through a slow gentle roll-up.

Learn the difference between a hitting shot played from a standing position and that played with a running motion.

Athlete Readiness

- Athlete is able to use smooth arm action throughout delivery of the bocce ball.
- Athlete understands concept and strategy of playing a faster released shot.

Teaching the Event

Standing position

Stance

- ◆ The athlete spreads feet slightly apart, the width of the shoulders.
- ◆ Take one step forward on the opposite leg to the arm with which he/she rolls, i.e. a right-handed athlete steps with left foot forward.
- ◆ Ensure your feet are pointing toward the target. And remember to always focus your eyes on the target

Delivery

- ◆ Push the ball forward to approximately eye level followed by a downward swing.
- ◆ Bring your arm straight back, close to your body.
- ◆ Keep your elbow straight and take your weight mainly on the back foot.
- ◆ As you smoothly bring your arm straight forward, transfer your weight to your front foot.
- ◆ As your arm passes close to your leg, your weight should be balanced between both feet.

Release

- ◆ Release ball onto the court surface just in front of you.
- ◆ Continue moving hand forward and upward in a natural follow-through motion.
- ◆ Keep front foot behind the foul line and shoulders square to the target.

This shot can also be played with a tossing motion.

Teaching Points

This shot is played with the same motion as the pointing shot except that it is played with more force.

Stand behind the player

- ◆ While the ball is waist high, put the player's hands underneath the ball and push it up and out to eye level.
- ◆ With the player's right hand underneath the ball, take the player's right hand. with the ball in it, and make a downward swing.
- ◆ At the same time, extend the player's left arm outward for balance.
- ◆ Stand behind the player while he/she is standing in the back swing position with arm extended.
- ◆ With the right hand, support the ball from underneath and start forward motion of the ball.



Stand beside the player

- ♦ Have the player swing the ball forward, and ensure the ball is being released in a smooth motion. If not, with your right hand, force the ball loose from the grip so that it goes forward.

Stand behind the player

- ♦ After release of the ball, place right hand on the player’s right hand and wrist.
- ♦ Move his/her arm upward so that his/her arm is parallel to the ground.
- ♦ At the same time, with your leg, slide the player’s left leg forward so that it stops before the foul line. Adjust player’s shoulders square to the target.

Key Words

- Ball out and down
- Knee slightly bent
- Look at your target
- Shoulders slightly forward
- Begin back swing
- Step forward
- Quickly and smoothly bring arm forward
- Follow through toward target and upward

Coaching Tips

- Here the emphasis is to deliver the bocce ball with greater force than for a “Pointing” delivery. For the player to establish good speed through the final stage of delivery, he/she needs to start with the ball high in the back swing to gain force behind the ball.
- You may have to help the athlete not only with the initial forward swing, but with actually bringing the bocce ball forward following the completion at the top of the subsequent back swing.

Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
Ball is traveling in an upward direction rather than an outward one	Have athlete release ball earlier, or closer to the ground.	Have athlete practice quick smooth releases to very short distance targets.
Ball is not traveling at speed.	Hold athlete’s arm at top of back swing and have him/her pull against your force.	Have athlete practice counting out loud to their movements, increasing the speed of action each time.
Arm is not passing close to the body.	Place a towel under athlete’s armpit throughout movement.	Arm Wall Swings will assist muscle memory and let the athlete feel how the arm should flow and the path it should take.
Wrist is turning at release.	Have athlete practice with a piece of paper in hand and try and obtain wrist flicks.	Have athlete practice Wrist Flicks drill and also pitch a softball underhand back and forth with a friend.



Coaches' Tips: Hitting/Spocking – At-A-Glance

Tips for Practice

1. When holding the ball at side, have athlete count his/her movements. This will help prepare the athlete for learning the flow and speed of the delivery.
 - ◆ If the athlete has too much back swing, a handkerchief placed under the armpit of the bowling arm may help correct the problem. On a proper back swing, the handkerchief remains in place and does not fall out
 - ◆ “One” - ball swings forward
 - ◆ “Two” - ball swings back
 - ◆ “Three ” - forward swing with speed
 - ◆ “Four” - and released ball up the court
2. Tell the athlete, “Do not apply too much muscle power to the swing; just let the weight of the ball carry it back but then bring the arm straight forward at speed.”
3. Talk the athlete through the delivery.
4. Once the athlete begins to use the proper movement from a standing position, if he/she wants to progress to a running shot, have the athlete get into an approach rhythm and count steps. Count “1” for 1st step and ball moves forward, “2” for 2nd step and ball moves back, “3” for 3rd step and ball comes forward, “4” for 4th step and “release the ball.” Do this without a ball a few times, increasing the speed of action each time. Repeat after a few times using a ball.
5. Stand behind the athlete, counting the steps while the athlete performs the steps. After a few times, let the athlete practice on his/her own. Remember, have him/her count the steps out loud.
6. To get the athlete to release the ball before stepping over the foul line, place a towel or small piece of rope from one side of the court to the other over the foul line, and tell the athlete to throw the ball out over the towel/rope.
7. Position of arm and hand on the follow-through can be demonstrated by taking a towel and putting a knot in it. Give the towel to the athlete and then back away. Have the athlete do a one-step delivery, throwing the towel to you and using your stomach as the target. Watch the follow-through; the athlete should have his/her right arm extended with the right hand pointing at your stomach and the wrist pointing up. Explain that this is the same motion to use when rolling a bocce ball.
8. A home training method is to have athlete and a friend practice pitching a softball underhand back and forth to each other. The same motion is used to deliver the bocce ball. After the pitch, look at the position of the arm, hand and thumb.
9. Correct athlete if rolling hand finishes across and in front of the body.
10. Hand, arm and shoulder follow through in a straight line with target. After the ball has left the athlete’s hand, have him/her follow through so that the elbow passes to the position directly above the head.

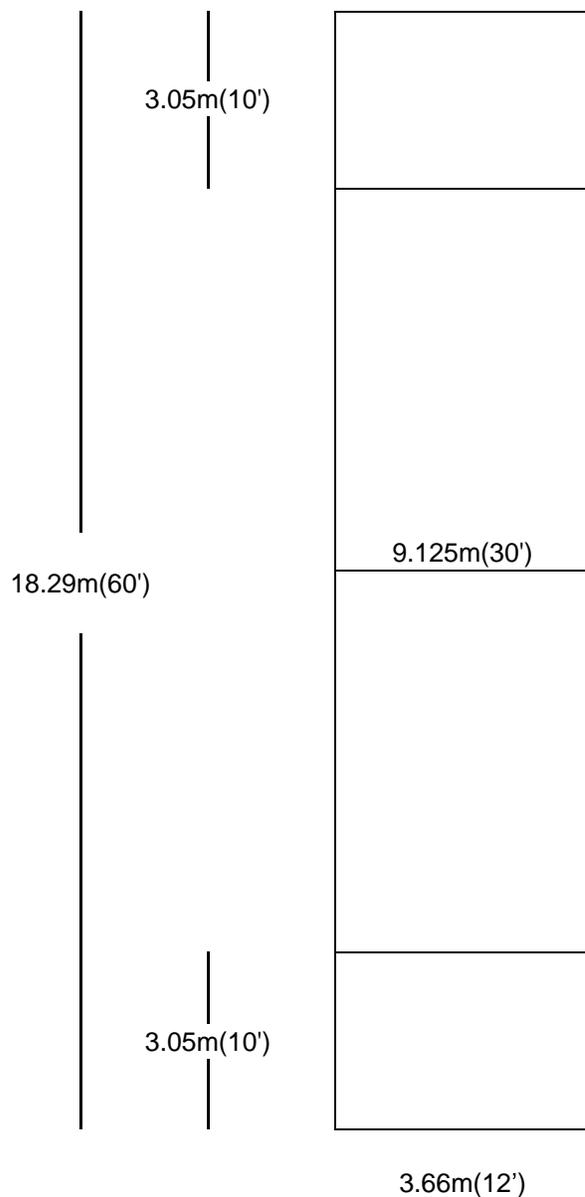


The Bocce Court

Bocce is played on a bocce court, also called a bocce pit.

Measurements

The court is an area 3.66 meters (12 feet) wide by 18.29 meters (60 feet) long.



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



The Composition of a Bocce Court

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 or consistency of terrain.

Bocce Court Walls

These are the side and end walls of the court and may be composed of any rigid material. The end walls should be at least 3 feet in height. The end walls should be composed of a rigid material such as wood or Plexiglas. The side walls must be at least as high as the bocce balls at all points. The side and end walls may be utilized during play for bank shots or rebound shots.



Bocce Court Markings

All courts should be clearly marked for the following:

- 3.05 meters (10 foot line) from the back boards – foul line for pointing, hitting/spocking.
- 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 permanently drawn from side board to side board.



Event-specific Drills

Ball Pick Ups

Have athletes bend and pick up a bocce ball, remembering to have them hold their backs straight as they stoop and pick up the ball. Then have them repeat the exercise but place the ball back down on the ground.

Repeat this drill 3 - 4 times.

(Talk about the importance of having a straight back during the entire movement so as to avoid back strain.)

Forward Step and Rock Backs

Athletes stand with feet slightly spread apart (shoulder width).

Take one step forward.

- ◆ Watch length of their stride, ensuring it is not too far or too short.
- ◆ Also watch for balance as they step forward, as their base may spread.

Now have them rock back to the starting position

Repeat this drill 3 - 4 times.

Arm Swing

Have each athlete swing his/her bowling arm in a flowing and steady movement back and forth, back and forth, and count to 12 as each swing is done.

- ◆ Watch that their movement is straight through from start to finish and that they do not round the belly or out to the side.
- ◆ Also watch to ensure that the palm of the hand is not turning during the follow-through.



Teaching Bocce Skills

Skill Progression- Recognition of equipment used

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Recognize a bocce ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the color differences of the bocce balls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the pallina	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the tape measure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the flags used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate the connection between flag color and bocce ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Skill Progression- Recognition of playing field

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Recognize the 10-foot foul line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the 30-foot half way line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the 50-foot line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the back boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the side boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Skill Progression- Recognition of playing terms

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Recognize the term "In" & "Out" team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the term "foul"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the term "pointing"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the term "hitting"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the term "banking"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the term "rebounding"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Skill Progression- Pointing (Standing Release)

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Collect ball from back of court and step up to foul line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deliver bocce ball using correct stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand with feet appropriately spread	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold the bocce ball correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct arm swing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct release of ball from hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain correct wrist posture once bocce ball has left the hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct follow-through with full arm extension following release of ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimize head movement throughout drill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Skill Progression- Pointing (Stepping Release)

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Collect ball from back of court and stand correctly back from the foul line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare to deliver the bocce ball from the correct starting stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold the bocce ball correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Step forward using appropriate forward leg movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand with forward foot appropriately positioned	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand with feet appropriately spaced to give a balanced base	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct back arm swing at appropriate time of stepping forward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct force to deliver “pointing” shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct forward arm swing at appropriate time of stepping forward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct release of ball from hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain correct wrist posture once bocce ball has left the hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct follow-through with full arm extension following release of bocce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimize head movement throughout drill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Skill Progression- Hitting

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Collect ball from back of court and stand correctly back from the foul line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare to deliver the bocce ball from the correct starting stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold the bocce ball correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Step forward using appropriate forward leg movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand with forward foot appropriately positioned	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand with feet appropriately spaced to give a balanced base	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct back arm swing at appropriate time of stepping forward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct force to deliver a "hitting" shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct forward arm swing at appropriate time of stepping forward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct release of ball from hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain correct wrist posture once bocce ball has left the hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct follow-through with full arm extension following release of ball	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimize head movement throughout drill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Totals

Skill Progression- Rebounding/Banking

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Collect ball from back of court and stand correctly back from the foul line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Align themselves correctly to deliver the appropriate shot.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare to deliver the bocce ball from the correct starting stance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hold the bocce ball correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Step forward using appropriate forward leg movement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand with forward foot appropriately spread	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stand with feet appropriately spaced to give a balanced base	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct back arm swing at appropriate time of stepping forward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct force to deliver a "banking/rebounding" shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct forward arm swing at appropriate time of stepping forward	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct release of ball from hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain correct wrist posture once bocce ball has left their hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use correct follow through with full arm extension following release of bocce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Minimize head movement throughout drill	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Totals



Skill Progression- Recognition of scoring process and terms

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Understand the point-scoring system used in the game of bocce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Follow the scoring on a score card	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the scores on a score card	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the places for the various signatures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the need to not sign a score card if the game is to be “protested”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			

Skill Progression- Recognition of Sportsmanship and Etiquette

Your Athlete Can	Never	Sometimes	Often
Exhibit sportsmanship and etiquette at all times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Demonstrate competitive effort while playing at all times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Select the correctly colored balls throughout the game	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wait for official to indicate player’s own turn to play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain knowledge of own/own team’s score	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Display good sportsmanship by cheering on fellow teammates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play cooperatively and competitively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take turns with other team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to coaches’ instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Totals			



Bocce Specific Drills

Distance Rolling

Purpose

This drill will highlight whether an athlete requires further instruction on playing a long or short game. If an athlete can consistently roll the balls to an area that is closer to the halfway line than he/she does when rolling to an area at the far end of the court, this would indicate that he/she is a short end athlete. (Question: is the athlete instructed to aim for the halfway line or far end, or is he/she instructed to roll the ball as far as he/she can? It is unclear what instruction the athlete should be given for this drill.)

Steps

- ◆ Use one full set of bocce balls (eight balls) on a flat/even surface.
- ◆ Have athlete roll/toss the balls as instructed by coach/teacher.
- ◆ Dependent upon outcome, note the number of balls producing the desired outcome.
- ◆ Repeat the task coming back down the court from the opposite end.
- ◆ Total the outcome (i.e. 12 out of 16, etc.).
- ◆ Redo assessment as agreed between athlete and coach/teacher.

Teaching Points

- ◆ The object of this drill is to improve the athlete's ability to gauge distance.
- ◆ Athletes need to understand the significance of the speed of delivery, and coaches should place an emphasis on this factor in coaching.
- ◆ Feeling the amount of energy needed to get a ball to a certain area of the court needs to be repeated to get the same result.
- ◆ The further down the court a ball is rolled, the greater the push needed to get it there.
- ◆ A softer roll means a lesser distance traveled by the ball.

Points of Emphasis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Distance is determined by speed of delivery● Setting up is a factor that also determines success● Athletes will learn from previous attempts and their body movements throughout● To be successful at this game, athletes need to have consistency through judgments of many different distances, not just short or just long● Athletes should always watch the movement of the bocce ball on the court and what it does and how it moves
When to Use:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The drill itself should be used as a separate skill but then it is used in conjunction with other skills of the game● Athletes can use this skills drill as part of a competition at training between fellow athletes



Key Words

- Feel the distance
- Remember soft for short distances and harder for long
- Smooth and gentle release
- Smooth movements
- Head as still as possible
- Shoulders square to the target
- Smooth back swing
- Smooth step forward
- Smooth forward arm movement
- Smooth follow-through toward target and upward

Coaching Tips

- Here the emphasis of this drill is to allow the athlete to experience success and achievement through a vital skill of the game. Irrespective of whether an athlete plays a very soft gentle roll to just over half way or a stronger delivery to a cluster at the far corner of the court, consistency is the key and this is determined by speed of the delivery of the bocce ball
- Smoothness through all stages of the pendulum swing is another key to achieving the goals set for this drill
- You may have to help the athlete not only with the initial forward swing, but with the back swing and slow, smooth forward action with follow through to target.
- Counting through all stages may assist players
- Using a “ticking clock scenario” may assist the athlete with the timing of the initial forward, then back, then forward and release



Directional Rolling

Purpose

To highlight if an athlete requires further instruction on the smooth release of the ball. If the player consistently has the ball knocking into cones part way down the path, it may be the release off the fingers needs to be addressed. Tape wrapped in a circle around the ball may also highlight this.

Steps

- ◆ Use one full set of Bocce balls (8 balls) on a flat/even surface
- ◆ Have athlete roll the balls as instructed by coach/teacher
- ◆ Start with the cones approximately 3 -4 feet apart, as athlete becomes more skilled at direction narrow the gap between
- ◆ Dependent upon outcome, note the number of balls producing the desired outcome
- ◆ Repeat the task coming back down the court from the opposite end
- ◆ Total the outcome.(i.e.12 out of 16, etc)
- ◆ Redo assessment as agreed between athlete & coach/teacher

Teaching Points

- ◆ The object of this drill is to improve the athletes ability to deliver consistently well directed balls along a defined path
- ◆ Athletes need to understand the significance of the initial set up prior to the delivery and coaches should place an emphasis on this factor in your coaching
- ◆ Feeling all the various muscle movements needed to get a ball to travel along a certain path of the court needs to be repeated to get the same result
- ◆ Sometimes using the sides of the court will give athletes greater success than rolling along the centre
- ◆ Keeping all the various lines of the body movements as straight as possible assists in getting good results

Points of Emphasis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Initial setting up is a major factor that also determines success.● An athlete will learn from previous attempts and from their body movements throughout.● To be successful at this game, athletes need to have consistency through judgments of many different directions from all parts of the court, not just from along the line next to the side walls.● Athletes should always watch the movement of the bocce ball on the court and what it does and how it moves.
When to Use:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The drill itself should be used as a separate skill but also in conjunction with other skills of the game.● Athletes can use this skills drill at training as part of a competition among fellow athletes.



Key Words

- Feel the body movements
- Remember to keep the body as straight as possible at all times
- Shoulders square to the target
- Smooth movements throughout
- Head as still as possible
- Keep the rolling hand close in to the body throughout
- Smooth straight back swing
- Smooth straight step forward
- Smooth straight forward arm movement
- Smooth straight follow-through toward target and upward

Coaching Tips

- The emphasis of this drill is to allow the athlete to experience success and achievement through a vital skill of the game. Irrespective of where on the court an athlete plays from, the ball will nearly always want to travel in a straight line, and this is determined by what the body movements were directly before the release.
- Consistency is the key, and this is determined by the body's alignment.
- Smoothness through all stages of the pendulum swing is another key to achieving the goals set for this drill.
- You may have to help the athlete not only with the initial forward swing, but with the back swing and slow, smooth forward action with follow-through to target.
- Counting through all stages may assist players.
- Using a "ticking clock scenario" may assist the athlete with the timing of the initial forward, then back, then forward and release.



Roll to a Designated Area of the Court

Purpose

This drill's purpose is to highlight whether an athlete requires further instruction on playing a ball to one particular part on the court, i.e. an athlete may find it easy to roll to a position nearer a wall than in the middle of the court, as he/she may use the walls to guide the ball up the court. This should also be used as a guide for an athlete who has a difference in his/her long or short game.

Steps

- ◆ Use one full set of bocce balls (eight balls) on a flat/even surface.
- ◆ Have athlete roll the balls as instructed by coach/teacher.
- ◆ Start with a large mat/target area for athlete to aim to.
- ◆ Vary the placement of the target area around the court to give the coach a better understanding of whether the athlete plays better when the area is in a certain place within the court.
- ◆ Dependent upon outcome, note the number of balls producing the desired outcome.
- ◆ Repeat the task coming back down the court from the opposite end.
- ◆ Total the outcome (i.e. 12 out of 16, etc).
- ◆ Redo assessment as agreed between athlete and coach/teacher.

Teaching Points

- ◆ The object of this drill is to improve the athlete's ability to deliver consistently well-directed balls using both the previous skills drills, for distance and direction.
- ◆ Athletes need to understand the significance of the other two skills to be able to deliver the balls to a determined area' and coaches should place an emphasis on these factors in your coaching.
- ◆ Feeling all the various muscle movements needed to get a ball to travel along a certain path to a certain point of the court needs to be repeated to get the same result.
- ◆ Sometimes, using the sides of the court will give athletes greater success than rolling along the center.
- ◆ Keeping all the various lines of the body movements as straight as possible assists in getting good results.
- ◆ Athletes may have no problems with grouping balls in an area that is close but may struggle when asked to repeat it further down the back of the court.

Points of Emphasis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Initial setting up is a major factor that also determines success.● As is the strength of delivery.● Athletes will learn from previous attempts and their body movements throughout● To be successful at this game, athletes need to have consistency through judgments of many different directions from all parts of the court, not just from along the line next to the side walls, or from a short distance to a long one.● Athletes should always watch the movement of the bocce ball on the court and what it does and how it moves.
When to Use:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The drill itself should be used as a separate skill, but then it also is used in conjunction with other skills of the game and should follow directional and directional skills training.● Athletes can use this skills drill at training as part of a competition among fellow athletes.



Key Words

- Feel the body movements
- Feel the distance
- Shoulders square to the target
- Remember soft for short distances and harder for long
- Head as still as possible
- Smooth movements throughout
- Smooth straight back swing
- Keep the rolling hand close in to the body throughout
- Smooth straight step forward
- Smooth straight forward arm movement
- Smooth and gentle release
- Smooth straight follow-through toward target and upward

Coaching Tips

- The emphasis of this drill is to allow the athlete to experience success and achievement through having learned two other vital skills of the game. Irrespective of where on the court an athlete plays from, the ball will nearly always want to travel in a straight line, and this is determined by what the body movements were directly before the release and how much muscle movement the athlete retained.
- Consistency is the key, and this is determined by the body's alignment.
- Smoothness through all stages of the pendulum swing is another key to achieving the goals set for this drill.
- You may have to help the athlete not only with the initial forward swing, but with the back swing and slow, smooth forward action with follow-through to target.
- Counting through all stages may assist players.
- Using a "ticking clock scenario" may assist the athlete with the timing of the initial forward, then back, then forward and release.



Tossing to a Designated Area of the Court

Purpose

This drill's purpose is to highlight whether an athlete requires further instruction on tossing the ball long or short with the ball held in the inverted position. If an athlete is consistently having difficulty tossing the balls 20 feet up the court, this may mean that he/she requires doing some form of strengthening of the shoulders and upper arm. This may also highlight an athlete who releases the ball too low, and therefore the trajectory will always mean that it will stay low and roll farther than if tossed later in the release, giving it a higher trajectory.

Steps

- ◆ Use one full set of bocce balls (eight balls) on a flat/even surface.
- ◆ Have athlete toss the balls as instructed by coach/teacher.
- ◆ Start with a large mat/target area for athlete to aim to approximately 20 feet up the court.
- ◆ Dependent upon outcome, note the number of balls producing the desired outcome.
- ◆ Repeat the task coming back down the court from the opposite end.
- ◆ Total the outcome (i.e. 12 out of 16, etc).
- ◆ Redo assessment as agreed between athlete and coach/teacher.

Teaching Points

- ◆ The object of this drill is to improve the athlete's ability to deliver consistently well-directed balls using the previous skills drills, for distance and direction. Only this time the bocce ball is tossed, no higher than waist height, rather than rolled along the ground.
- ◆ Athletes need to understand the significance of the other two skills to be able to toss the balls to a determined area, and coaches should place an emphasis on these factors in coaching.
- ◆ Feeling all the various muscle movements needed to get a ball to travel along this aerial path to a certain point of the court needs to be repeated to get the same result.
- ◆ Sometimes using the sides of the court will give athletes greater success than tossing the bocce ball up the center.
- ◆ Keeping all the various lines of the body movements as straight as possible assists in getting good results.
- ◆ Athletes may have no problems with grouping balls in an area that is close but may struggle when asked to repeat it farther down the back of the court.
- ◆ The farther up the court the player must toss the bocce ball, the greater the amount of effort needed to get it there.

Points of Emphasis:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The strength of the delivery is a major factor that also determines success.● As is the body's alignment.● An athlete will learn from previous attempts and their body movements throughout.● To be successful at this game, an athlete needs to have consistency through judgments of many different directions from all parts of the court, not just from along the line next to the side walls, or from a short distance to a long one, whether to roll along the court or go the aerial route.● Athletes should always watch the movement of the bocce ball once it lands on the court and what it does and how it moves.
When to Use:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The drill itself should be used as a separate skill, but then it is also used in conjunction with other skills of the game and should follow directional and directional skills training.● Athletes can use this skills drill at training as part of a competition among fellow athletes.



Key Words

- Feel the body movements
- Feel the distance
- Shoulders square to the target
- Remember, soft for short distances and harder for long
- Head as still as possible
- Smooth movements throughout
- Smooth straight back swing
- Keep the tossing hand close in to the body throughout
- Smooth straight step forward
- Smooth straight forward arm movement
- Smooth upward release is essential
- The later the release is left, the higher the trajectory
- Smooth straight follow-through toward target

Coaching Tips

- Here the emphasis of this drill is to allow the athlete to experience success and achievement through having learned two other vital skills of the game. Irrespective of where on the court an athlete plays from, the ball will nearly always want to travel in a straight line and this is determined by what the body movements were directly before the release and how much muscle movement the athlete retained.
- Consistency is the key and this is determined by the body's alignment.
- Smoothness through all stages of the pendulum swing is another key to achieving the goals set for this drill.
- You may have to help the athlete in the final stage when releasing the ball, so that it is released from no higher than the waist.
- Counting through all stages may assist players.
- Using a "ticking clock scenario" may assist the athlete with the timing of the initial forward, then back, then forward and release.
- When athlete attempts to move harder and faster to play this type of shot, the alignment will probably be the first thing affected.



Sample Workouts

The main equipment you will need for these games are:

- A set of bocce balls
- Cones or water-filled plastic bottles
- Hula Hoops/newspaper/pieces of carpet

Straight-line Rolling

- Start with two straight lines of cones evenly spaced up the court.
- It is suggested to start with the space between about four or five feet traveling up the length of the court.
- Now have your athlete roll the balls down the court and continue to practice this until he/she is constantly getting the balls to stay in the gap between the two rows of cones.
- As your athlete becomes better skilled at this distance, start to bring the gap between the rows a little closer. Again repeat the practice until you believe your athlete is ready for the cones to move in closer still.
- Keep repeating the skills until your athlete can roll through a one- to two-foot gap.
- Repeating this exercise over and over will assist your athlete to accurately roll the balls in the direction he/she wants the ball to go rather than in the general desired direction.
- Award points/score accordingly.

Accurate Target Distance Ball

- Using the same set as above, this drill is to practice the length of the roll.
- Ask your athlete to roll the ball down the track of cones and stop at a designated position between two sets of cones. Have him/her repeat this skill until competent at getting a high percentage of balls to stop within an agreed distance of cones.
- Remember to vary the requested distance, as a good athlete should be able to be accurate at short as well as long distances.
- This exercise will highlight whether your athlete needs to practice accuracy at certain distances.
- Award points/score accordingly.

Accurate Target Ball

- Spread three or four sheets of unfolded newspaper up the court, and have your athlete try to land all eight balls on the sheets.
- As the athlete begins to master this skill, remove one of the sheets (making the target smaller) and have him/her continue to land the balls on the remaining newspaper.
- Again remove another sheet as the athlete masters this.
- To really add a challenge, start to fold the remaining sheet of paper until the athlete can do it with ease.
- Remember to change the distance you position the paper within the court as you may have an athlete who can easily achieve the result when the paper is at one distance but needs to practice when the paper is at another.
- This highlights athletes who are “long end athletes” and “short end athletes.” Those who play better when the pallina is bowled a short distance up the court are short end athletes, and the opposite applies to long end athletes.
- Award points/score accordingly.

Bouncing/ Bombing

- Place a Hula Hoop, carpet piece or similar target about 5 feet in front of your athlete and have him/her toss the ball so that it lands on the target and rolls off it. For ongoing training, move the target area farther down the court and repeat.
- Award points/score accordingly.



Skittle Ball

- Set up a number of targets for the athlete to roll a ball toward (colored shapes, plastics bottles, bowling pins, etc.).
- Vary the position, distance and target size as appropriate.
- Award points/score accordingly.

Ricochet Ball

- Set up a target situation whereby your athlete is required to roll a ball toward a gap between the side wall and the object you have placed on the court (a colored shape, plastic bottle, bowling pin, etc.). The aim is to encourage your athlete to use the wall as a method of getting a point, etc.
- Vary the position, distance between the gap and distance of the gap in relation to the length of the court as appropriate.
- Award points/score accordingly.

Shuttle Run

- As part of a cool-down exercise, have your athletes split into two groups. Have them line up behind each other in a straight line facing down the court, behind one of the rows of the bottles/cones that are on the court following the last game. As a relay, have the first athletes run down the court and retrieve the last cone and return it to the feet of the next athlete on their team. As it is placed, the next athlete runs down the court and retrieves the last cone and returns to the starting position again. This is continued with each athlete until all the cones are in a pile in front of the teams and the winner is decided.
- This achieves several things: the athletes are having fun (with an element of competition), the cones have been returned and you as coach don't have to pick them all up (make a fun thing of this for your athletes) and the athletes will be laughing or cheering (a good note to end the session on).

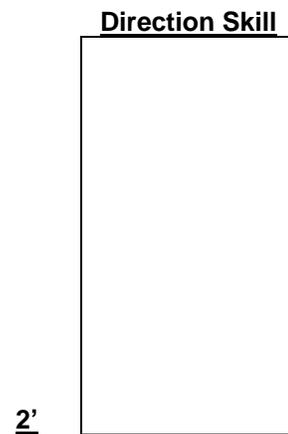
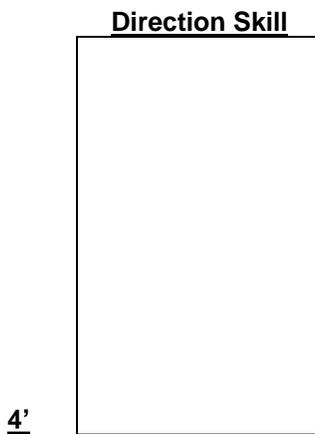
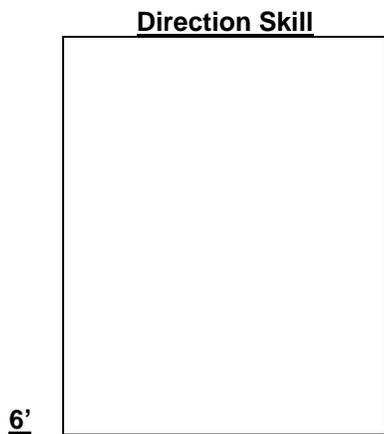
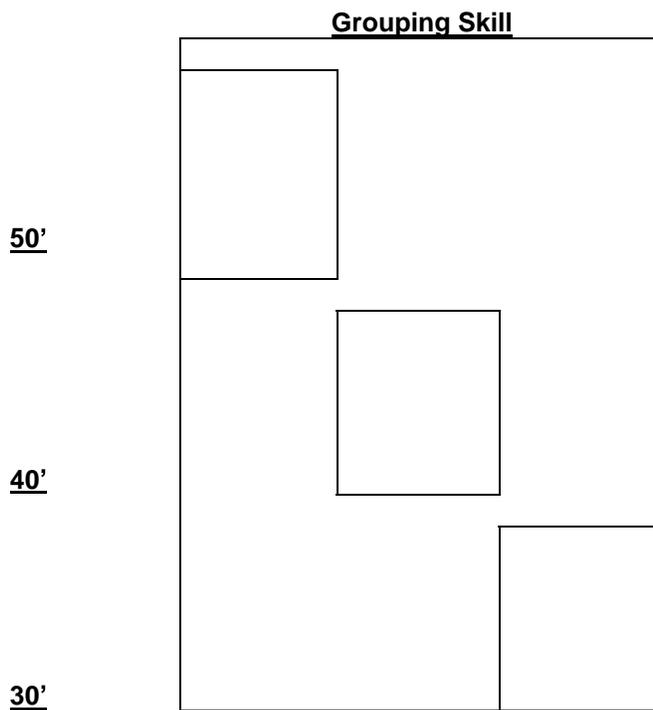
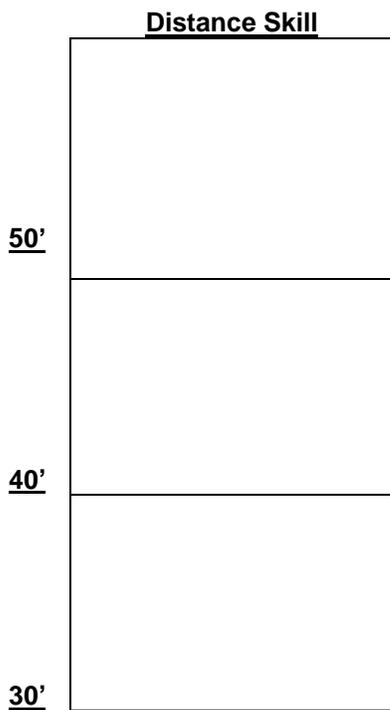
Remember:

- In practicing or playing any of the exercises and games, it is important that your athlete is consistently getting the desired outcome before making the task harder.
- Rather than having your athlete just getting the results a few times and then moving onto the next step, ensure that he/she is constantly getting the desired results; then move on.
- All of these are ways of improving your athletes' skill level in the game of bocce.
- These should be treated as separate skills, but on the whole they are all part of improving competencies and not only the overall standard of your team but also those of other teams who compete with them.



BOCCE SKILLS TEST SHEET

Athlete Name _____
Date of Skills Test _____





Modifications and Adaptations

In competition, it is important that the rules not be changed to suit athletes' special needs. There are, however, approved bocce aids that do accommodate the athlete's special needs and are permitted in the rules. Also, coaches can modify the training exercises, communication method and sport equipment to assist athletes in achieving success.

Modifications

Modifying Exercises

Modify the skills involved in an exercise so that all athletes can participate. For example, during the warm-up and cool-down, many stretching exercises can be done with or without the use of a chair.

Accommodating an Athlete's Special Needs

Use the sound of a bell for visually impaired athletes. For partially sighted athletes, a bright colored tube may be placed over the pallina and then removed as the ball travels down the court.

Encouraging Creativity

Coaches can structure training sessions so that athletes are asked to respond to challenging questions such as "Show me how to roll the ball down the court?" Such an approach permits athletes with various levels of ability to respond in ways that allow for success. Obviously, variations in response to these questions would be apparent from athlete to athlete depending on the level of ability and severity of impairment.

Modifying Your Communication Method

Different athletes require different communications systems. For example, some athletes learn and respond better to demonstrated exercises, whereas others require greater verbal communication. Some athletes may need a combination – to see, hear and even read a description of the exercise or skill.

Modifying Equipment

Successful participation for some athletes requires equipment modifications to suit their particular need, such as using smaller "developmental sized" balls for players with small hands.

Adaptations

More specific adaptations for bocce are listed below.

Orthopedic Impairments

6. Use a softball or similar sized ball.
7. Use obstacle courses marked by flags and/or gates.
8. Use smaller bocce balls for athletes with small hands.
9. Use larger soft ball for those athletes who may not be able to close their hand on a "normal" sized ball.
10. Use a softer textile ball for easy grip.
11. Use a rolling frame unit for players who are unable to lift the ball.
12. Use an adapter-pusher device to aid in pushing the ball down the court.
13. Use a handle bar extension accessory with the adapter-pusher device for ambulatory bowlers unable to lift the ball.
14. Use a preliminary arm swing rather than the traditional walking approach when delivering the ball.
15. Have the athlete roll from a chair or wheel chair.
16. Modify the approach by having the player roll from a standing position.



Auditory Impairments

Use flag or hand signals for start.

1. As bocce is played primarily with direction from the color of the flags the court official is holding, this game is ideal for any athlete with an auditory impairment.
2. Use rubber shaped footsteps.
3. Play six balls per end/frame.
4. Use no foul lines.
5. Shorten distance between foul line and end of court.
6. Use a harder surface to allow greater roll for those athletes with poor upper body strength.
7. Use smaller or lighter balls.

Visual Impairments

1. Use large targets for athletes to aim at.
2. Use brightly colored equipment.
3. Use a brightly colored pipe held over the pallina .
4. Use a guide rail to help the individual locate his/her starting position and to assist his/her delivery on the approach.
5. Let the athlete feel the swing of your arm.
6. Have a sighted assistant tell the athlete where the pallina is in relation to end/side of the court or the distance from the delivery point.



Mental Preparation and Training

Mental training is important for the athlete, whether striving to do his/her personal best or competing against others. Mental imagery is very effective. The mind cannot tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined. Practice is practice, regardless of whether it is mental or physical.

Ask the athlete to sit in a relaxed position, in a quiet place with few distractions. Tell the athlete to close his/her eyes and picture performing a particular skill. Each is seeing him/herself on a large movie screen on a bocce court. Walk them through the skill step by step. Use as much detail as possible, using words to elicit all the senses - sight, hearing, touch, and smell. Ask the athlete to repeat the image, picture rehearsing the skill successfully - even to the point of seeing the ball going along the court and stopping next to the pallina.

For example, to visualize a nice, smooth "pointing shot," ask your athlete to see him/herself stepping into the court and preparing to roll the bocce ball up the court. Look as he/she holds the bocce ball in hand, ready to take that first step. Then watch as he/she takes that first good straight forward step with the ball swinging back in the arm and then coming forward in a nice and smooth feeling and motion. Watch as it leaves the hand and travels directly toward the target area and the athlete sees as it finishes next to the pallina and claims the point. Listen to the crowd as they clap for such a good shot.

Some athletes need help to start the process. Others will learn to practice this way on their own. The link between performing the skills in the mind and performing the skills on the court may be hard to explain. However, the athlete who repeatedly imagines him/herself correctly completing a skill and believing it to be true is more likely to make it happen. Whatever goes into one's mind and one's heart comes out in the actions.



Cross Training in Bocce

Cross training is a modern-day term which refers to the substitution of skills other than the skills directly involved in the performance of an event. Cross training came about as a result of injury rehabilitation and is now also used in injury prevention. When runners sustain injuries in the legs or feet that keeps them from running, other activities can be substituted so that the athlete can keep up his/her aerobic and muscular strength.

There is a limited value and cross over to the specific exercise. A reason to "cross train" is to avoid injury and maintain muscular balance during a period of intense sport specific training. One of the keys to success in sport is staying healthy and training over the long haul. Cross training allows athletes to do event-specific training workouts with greater enthusiasm and intensity, or less risk of injury.

Simple Cross Training Exercises

Wrist Flicks

- ◆ Ask athlete to hold a piece of paper (A4 or letter size).
- ◆ Ask him/her to simply hold the paper in the hand with wrist facing forward.
- ◆ Then bring the hand forward in a delivery motion to shoulder height, and then return it to its start position.
- ◆ Observe that the paper always travels forward. It should, if done correctly fold backward under the extended fingers and curl back the other way on the downward motion.
- ◆ This exercise will assist the athlete to deliver the bocce ball with the right wrist motions.

Arm Wall Swings

- ◆ Ask athlete to stand side on to a wall with the shoulder only slightly touching the wall.
- ◆ Ensure his/her usual delivery arm is closest to the wall.
- ◆ Then have the athlete swing the arm in the same delivery motion as if about to deliver a ball on the court.
- ◆ Avoid the arm swinging out from the wall when extended out the front.
- ◆ This exercise will assist muscle memory and let the athlete feel how the arm should flow and the path it should take when delivering a bocce ball.

Book Balancing/ Floppy Hat on the Head

- ◆ Ask athlete to place a small book or a floppy hat on his/her head and repeat the delivery motion.
- ◆ Ensure that during the whole movement the book does not fall or the hat topple.
- ◆ This exercise will assist the athlete to keep his/her head still and upright during the entire movement.

Tossing Drills

- ◆ Using tennis balls, stand five to ten feet back and toss them into a container, e.g. trash can or similar.
- ◆ As your athlete becomes more proficient at completing this exercise, extend the distance of the container.
- ◆ This exercise will assist the athlete to judge distances he/she may need to toss the bocce ball. It will also improve coordination and perception of harder throw = quicker release = greater distance.



Swing Path Drills

The following drills will also allow the athlete to feel the movement the body makes and its relationship to direction of ball rolled.

- Using tennis/softballs, stand in normal delivery stance and roll a ball along an inside hallway, without moving. Roll another ball along the same pathway up the hall and repeat with all balls. (This drill requires an additional person, another athlete or coach, to pass the balls to athlete doing drill.)
- Again stand in the normal delivery stance, and swing arm back and forth close to body with elbow tucked in close.
- Kneel on the floor and practice the swing with an open hand motion.



Home Training Program

- If athletes only train once a week with their coaches and do no training on their own, progress will be very limited. Training kits are available for most sports that include most of the equipment you would need to practice at home.
- An Athlete Handbook/Home Training Guide can be downloaded from the Special Olympics website to assist coaches in integrating home training into their season, as well as helping athletes and families with ideas on how to practice between practices!
- Nothing improves the athlete's sport ability like playing! Parents/guardians can challenge the athlete to family competitions for additional practice or just social outings.
- To be effective, coaches should run a home training orientation for family members and/or training partners. This should be an active session where partners get hands-on experience with the different activities.
- As a motivational tool, a coach may want to award a Certificate of Achievement to athletes and training partners who complete a set number of home training sessions during the season.



Special Olympics

Bocce Rules, Protocol & Etiquette



Table of Contents

Teaching Bocce Rules	73
Basic Rules for a Bocce Competition	73
Unified Sports® Rules	74
Protest Procedures	74
Bocce Protocol & Etiquette	75
Sportsmanship	77
Bocce Glossary	79



Teaching Bocce Rules

The best time to teach the rules of bocce is during practice. Please refer to Official Special Olympics Sports Rules Book for the complete listing of bocce rules. As a coach teaching the basic rules of bocce is critical to the success of the athletes for example, athletes should know what each of the lines on the court means, etc. Your athlete:

- ♦ Shows an understanding of the game.
- ♦ Understands that a game consists of playing to a certain number of points.
- ♦ Knows what each of the lines on the court means.
- ♦ Knows to watch for direction from Flag and Court Official as to turn to play.
- ♦ Knows that points scored as a result of a possible foul may not be counted as points scored.
- ♦ Knows to roll four balls in a singles competition.
- ♦ Knows to roll two balls in a doubles competition.
- ♦ Knows to roll only one ball in a fours competition.
- ♦ Adheres to the rules of the bocce court and training area.
- ♦ Follows official Special Olympics bocce rules.

Basic Rules for a Bocce Competition

1. Divisioning scores will be used to determine divisions for establishing sections.
2. The format for the competition can vary from a single elimination, double elimination or a round robin.
3. "Full tournament sized" balls, usually green and red, are used for the tournament.
4. Flags/bats/paddles of the same color as the balls are used.
5. In singles, players will play four balls each and the winning score will be first to 12 points.
6. In pairs/doubles, players will play two balls each and the winning score will be first to 12 points.
7. In fours/teams players will play one ball each and the winning score will be first to 16 points.
8. Athletes will follow the direction of the court officials at all times.
9. Ten-foot foul line, thirty-foot halfway lines are to be used during a competition.
10. All foul line violations are to be called as violations and penalties imposed.
11. All incorrect numbers of balls played or incorrect order of play are called as violations and penalties imposed.
12. 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.)
13. Games will be completed at the completion of the end in which a team scores the appropriate total number of points.

If for any reason coaches are unsure on any of the above rules, please contact the Tournament Director for bocce before the tournament starts.

Coaching Tips

Rules of the bocce court area are the rules you make for your program. These would include such things as:

- Athletes will remain outside the court area ready to play as soon as indicated by the court official.
- No food or drink, except water, when training and playing.
- Individuals should be designated to assist the lower ability players into and out of the court.



Unified Sports® Rules

There are few differences in the rules for Unified Sports® competition and the rules as stipulated in the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules Book and modifications outlined in the rules book. The additions are highlighted below:

Unified Sports Team

- ♦ Each Unified Sports doubles team shall consist of one athlete and one partner.
- ♦ Each Unified Sports team event shall consist of two athletes and two partners.
- ♦ Each game shall commence with a coin toss. Either member of the team that wins the toss starts the game by throwing the pallina and the first ball. The second ball is thrown by either member of the opposing team.

Protest Procedures

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition. The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As coach, your duty to your athletes and team is to protest any action or event while your athlete is competing that you think violated the official Special Olympics bocce rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome of an event. Making a protest is a serious matter that impacts a competition's schedule. Check with the competition management team prior to competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.



Bocce Protocol & Etiquette

While casual or fun games of bocce can be full of banter, laughter and frivolity, whenever serious bocce is played, as in a tournament or competition, there need to be certain rules of good sportsmanship and conduct that each competitor must follow. This will allow the athletes to compete at their best without any distractions.

Whether during practice or competition, athletes should be encouraged to abide by the following:

“Rules of the Court”

1. When it is not your turn, you should stand quietly out of the court.
2. Remain as quiet as possible from the time the other player has taken his/her stance until after he/she has delivered the ball.
3. Wait until the frame has been completed before moving to the other end of the court.
4. Always walk up the side of the court rather than up the middle of the court.
5. While waiting for another player to deliver the ball, always remain as motionless as possible.
6. Wait until the other player has delivered his/her ball and is about to move off the court before you step into the court to take your turn.
7. Always leave the balls as they lie until the official has instructed you to move them.
8. After you have delivered your ball, leave the court without undue or unnecessary delay.
9. Always observe safety rules when playing.
10. Always observe the instructions given by the official.
11. Always give your opponent the respect he/she deserves.
12. Always give the officials the respect they deserve.

During Practice

Athletes

- Always listen to information conveyed by their coach.
- Follow the instructions given by their coach.
- Prepare themselves ready to practice physically.
- Always dress in appropriate attire to practice bocce, i.e. correct shoes, clothes, etc.
- Follow any safety messages given by the coach.
- Pass on to the right people any important information that may have been given to them by their coach.
- Ask questions if they are unsure as to what the coach is asking them to do.

Coaches

- Always be on time and ready to start any training sessions.
- Ensure that your athletes and fellow coaches understand what the goal is for this training session.
- Give clear and concise instructions to all people attending your training sessions.
- Listen to any clarification from your athletes regarding information they may not understand.
- Instruct your athletes and fellow coaches on any health and safety issues regarding this training session.
- Always provide elements of learning and fun in your training sessions.



At Competition

Athletes

- ♦ Always listen to information conveyed by the court officials.
- ♦ Abide by the decisions made by the court officials.
- ♦ Show all respect and dignity to fellow competitors.
- ♦ Prepare themselves ready to play.
- ♦ Always dress in appropriate attire to play bocce, i.e. correct shoes, clothes, etc.

Coaches

- ♦ Ensure that your players are on time and ready to play.
- ♦ Ensure that your athletes and fellow coaches understand the local rules for this event as conveyed at previous training sessions.
- ♦ Ensure that your athletes' entry information is accurate, up to date and correct for this competition.
- ♦ Listen to any clarification from the competition/event manager.
- ♦ Abide by the instructions and decisions made by the court officials.



Sportsmanship

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and athlete's commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes. Lead by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event.
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition.
- Always finish a match/event: Never quit.

Fair Play at All Times

- Always comply with the rules.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times.

Expectations of Coaches

1. Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow.
2. Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship and ethics the top priorities.
3. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the event and display no behavior that could incite fans.
4. Treat opposing coaches, directors, participants and fans with respect.
5. Shake hands with officials and the opposing coach in public.
6. Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.

Expectations of Athletes & Partners in Unified Sports®

1. Treat teammates with respect.
2. Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
3. Treat opponents with respect: shake hands prior to and after contests.
4. Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the contest and display no behavior that could incite fans.
5. Cooperate with officials, coaches or directors and fellow participants to conduct a fair contest.
6. Do not retaliate (verbally or physically) if the other team demonstrates poor behavior.
7. Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing Special Olympics.
8. Define winning as doing your personal best.
9. Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coach.

Coaching Tips

- Discuss bocce etiquette, such as congratulating opponent after all events, win or lose; and controlling temper and behavior at all times.
- Teach waiting for one's turn during play.
- Teach standing quietly while waiting for your turn to play.
- Give sportsmanship awards or recognition after each meet or practice.
- Always commend the athletes when they demonstrate sportsmanship.



Remember

- ◆ Sportsmanship is an attitude that is shown in how you and your athletes act on and off the field of play.
- ◆ Be positive about competing.
- ◆ Respect your opponents and yourself.
- ◆ Always stay under control if you are feeling mad or angry.



Bocce Glossary

Term	Definition
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 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 playing 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 played 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 this 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 wait its turn until the opposition gets closer, whereupon the opposition becomes the “in team.”
Live ball	Can also be termed “good.” The phrase is used to explain to 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 called 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 1¾ 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 or 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 called 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 Partners 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.

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