



Special Olympics Coaching Quick Start Guide

BOCCIE



Special Olympics

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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



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 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 athletes 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.



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.



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 	<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"> • 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 and 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.

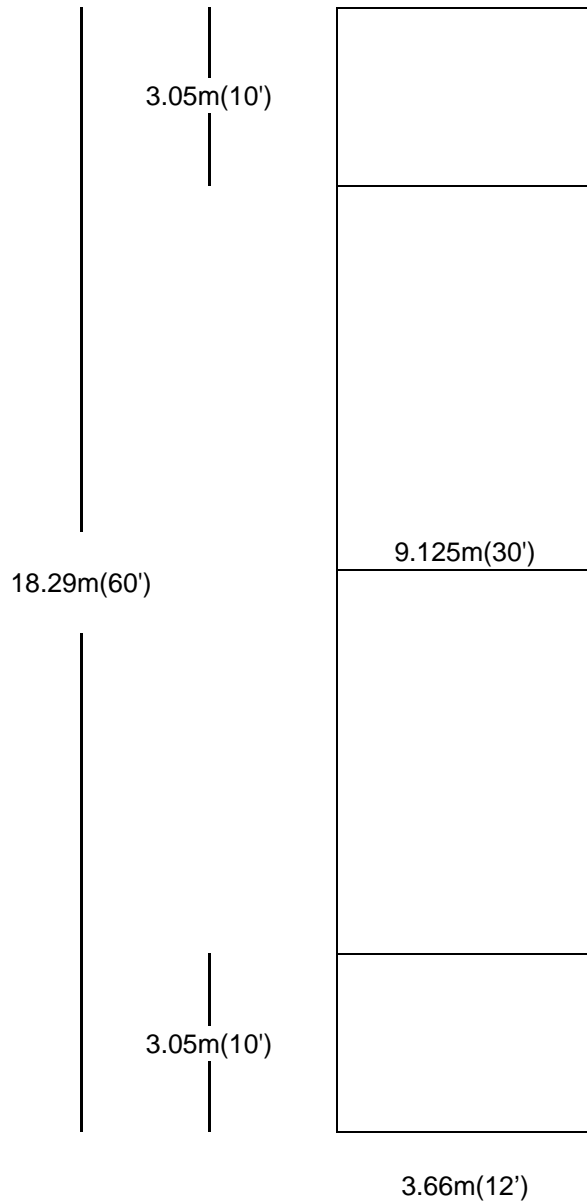


The Bocce Court

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.



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



Bocce Attire

Appropriate bocce attire is required for all competitors. As a 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, jeans or jean shorts are not proper bocce attire for any event. Explain that athletes cannot perform their best while wearing jeans that restrict their movement. 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.
- ♦ Players are not permitted to wear shoes which may damage or disrupt the court surface.
- ♦ Players are not permitted to play without shoes. 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

Tournament Rules 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>



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.



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 a 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.



During 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.



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.



Appendix: Skill Development Tips

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 Grip

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.



The Grip – Faults & Fixes Chart

Error	Correction	Drill/Test Reference
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 Stance

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.

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.



The Stance – 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

<p>Tips for Practice</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.



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.

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.



The Pointing Shot – 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: The Pointing Shot – 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.

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.



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.

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.



The Hitting/Spocking Shot – 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: The Hitting/Spocking Shot – 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.



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