



Special Olympics

Teaching Bocce Skills



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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.

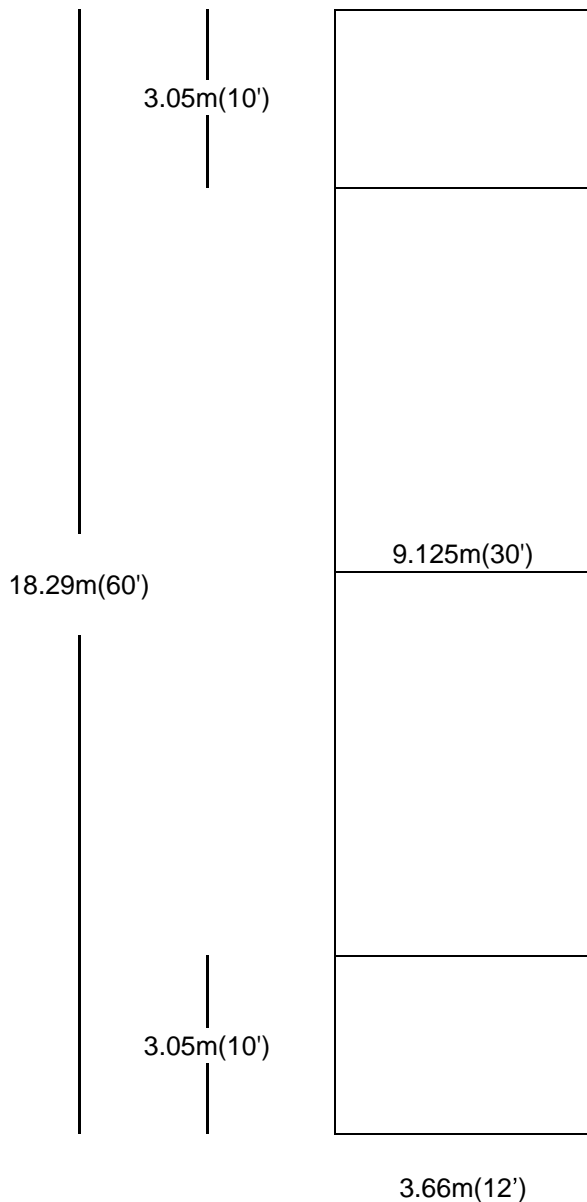


The Bocce Court

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"/>
<hr/>			
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"/>
<hr/>			
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).

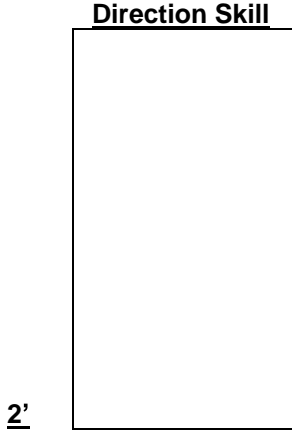
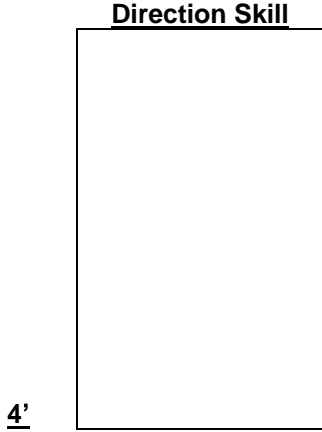
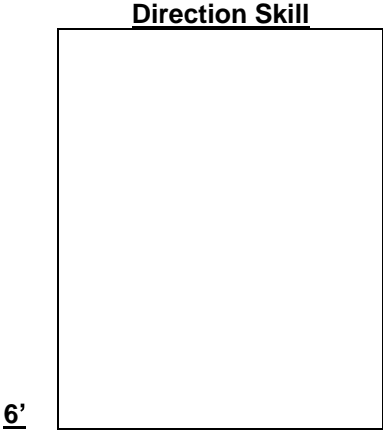
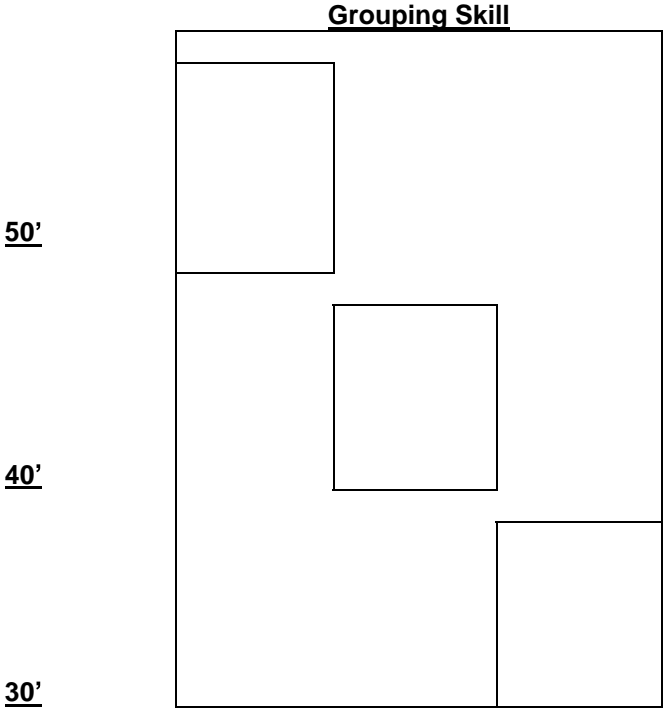
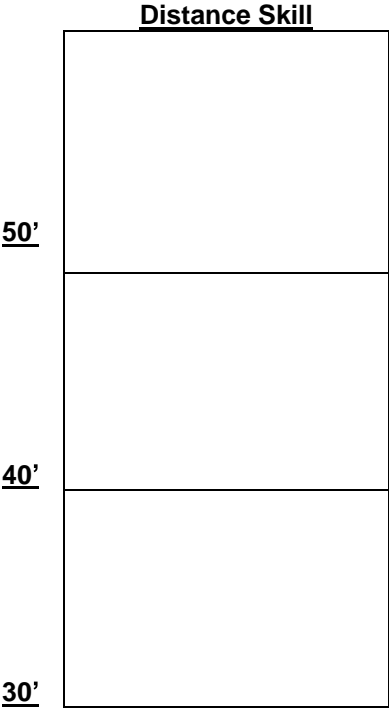
Remember:

- 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

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

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