



**VILLAGES BOCCE CLUB  
TOURNAMENT RULES AND PROCEDURES**

This document is intended for use by Tournament Captains, Players and Referees.

This document is available on the Bocce Club Website:  
<http://bit.ly/BocceTournamentRules> and in the kiosk at the Bocce Courts.

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## **SECTION ONE - TOURNAMENT RULES**

### **1) TEAM ROSTER CHANGES:**

Changes to a team roster are allowed up until the moment when the first ball of the game is thrown. Team Rosters are posted in the Bocce cabinet during tournament play. Rosters available on the web at Bocce Club website: [www.villagesbocceclub.com](http://www.villagesbocceclub.com) and at the courts

### **2) MEASURING:**

**When measuring is taking place only 3 people allowed on the court – the Referee plus each team Captain (or their Designee).**

**If designated measurers are on the court the Captains must stay off.**

**Until the ball count is given, balls may only be moved or touched by the Referee. (See section 13 for more specifics)**

### **3) SUBSTITUTIONS:**

Player substitution is allowed **only** at the beginning of a frame and substituting players must be listed on the team roster. A subbed-out player **cannot** return to play for the remainder of that game but may play in the second game.

During a game each player may **only** play from one end of the court but may switch to the other end for the second game.

**Substitution exception allowed in an extreme emergency:** if a team has only five players available and a player needs to leave the game, a subbed-out player could be allowed to move to the other end of the court with the agreement of the opposing team Captain. If a team is reduced to three players, it is declared a forfeit.

### **4) FORFEITS:**

A team **must have four players ready to start** the match at the official starting time, otherwise that team forfeits two games.

If a team loses a player during the first game, and cannot field a team of four, the first and second games must be forfeited.

If a team loses a player during the second game and cannot field a team of four, then that team forfeits the second game. If the team forfeiting the second game had won the first game, then that team still gets credit for the first win.

### **5) ERRANT BALL THROWING:**

If a player throws the wrong colored ball, whether it disturbs another ball or not, replace that ball with the correct color on the court. No penalty.

If an errant thrown ball is not stopped in time and subsequently moves any other balls the opposing team may ask the Referee to return any moved balls to their original approximate positions.

If a player throws more than two balls in a frame the Referee can stop the ball and return it to the correct player.

#### **6) FOUL LINE:**

Players must not step on or over the foul line when releasing the pallino or ball.

After two warnings, *by the referee*, if the same player crosses the foul line again, two actions will be taken:

1. The referee removes the thrown ball and returns disturbed balls to their previous positions.
2. A point is forfeited to the opposing team.

#### **7) LAST FRAME - TIME RUNNING OUT:**

When the time allotted for the game runs out and the frame is in process, it will be completed.

When time is running out; the pallino may be set as long as the game balls are not impeding the roll of the pallino.

Once play has completed on both courts and points have been awarded, the referee starts the 10 minute warmup clock.

#### **8) GAME ENDS IN A TIE:**

If a game ends in a tie, then a “one-ball roll-off” will resolve the tie. The team that scored last (to create the tie) gets the pallino, chooses the court end, and throws the pallino and ‘one ball’. **Captains may select any team member (including themselves) to throw in the roll-off. *The player and end must be declared by captains before any roll takes place. No changes can be made once the pallino is rolled.***

## **SECTION TWO - TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES**

### **9) TERMINOLOGY:**

- Frame: 8 balls thrown.
- Game: 40 minutes of League play or Tiebreaker play, 50 minutes for Village Challenge play, and 60 minutes of Playoff and Championship play.
- Match: Two 40 minute Games in League play separated by a mandatory 10 minute break after the first game.
- League: Teams that play on one day and in one time slot (e.g. Monday 10:30am)
- League Play: Teams within each League play each other to determine the League winner. Typically one Match per week (except for Rain or makeup games).
- Tournament: Consists of League Play (typically 6 weeks long), and Playoffs (typically the week after the end of League Play).
- Playoffs: League winners play each other to determine the two teams to play in the Championship Game. The two teams that lose in the semi-final games will playoff to determine the third place for the Tournament. Each Playoff match is only one Game.
- Championship: The two teams winning the Playoffs play to determine first and second place. The Championship consists of only one Game.

### **10) TEAM:**

A minimum of 6, maximum of 8 players. If a team cannot field a team of at least four players at any point during play, then they will forfeit one or two games. See section 4, "Forfeits". Non-playing captains are not a part of the team.

### **11) PLAYERS:**

Must be a member of the Villages Bocce Club.

A player can play on one team only during the tournament. Players should keep the pace of play moving.

### **12) PRE-MATCH PRACTICE TIME:**

Courts are reserved up to 60 minutes ahead of game start. 30 minutes before the game, the referee or designee will toss the coin with captains or designee to determine color and pallino possession. Home captain calls the flip of the coin. Prior to coin toss the need for yellow balls must be declared.

### **13) CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### ***HOME TEAM:***

Home Team designation is shown in parentheses “(Team #)” on the Match Schedule.

- Home Team Captain schedules a Referee for the team’s home matches.
- Unlock the back cabinet and get the tournament balls out. Code to unlock given out at the Captains’ meeting.
- If no Referee is available, the Home Team Captain selects a Bocce member to serve as the Referee for the first game. The opposing team selects for the second game.
- Participate in the coin toss.
- Inform the Referee if a designated player will be measuring for the team.
- Fill out and get the Score Sheet signed by the opposing Team Captain.
- Place the form in the Completed Match Score Sheet envelope (in the cabinet). Appendix 2
- After the match, make sure the tournament balls are securely locked in the back cabinet. Check that the scoreboard is covered, and umbrellas are down.

#### ***OPPOSING TEAM:***

- Help get the tournament balls out of the cabinet.
- If no Referee is available, the Opposing Team Captain selects a Bocce member to serve as the Referee for the second game.
- Participate in the coin toss.
- Inform the Referee if a designated player will be measuring for the team.
- Sign the Match Score Sheet.
- Ensure that the win/loss scores are correct. Check carefully.
- After the match, make sure the tournament balls are securely locked in the back cabinet. Check that the scoreboard is covered, and umbrellas are down.

#### ***BOTH CAPTAINS:***

- Be aware and ready for measuring when needed.
- When the Referee hesitates to call the points - that is your signal that the balls are close.  
You (or your measuring designee) should already be in position to check it out.
- Captains (or designees) must react prior to the ball count- call if they want a measurement or have a question on the ball count. Before the last ball of the frame is thrown a Captain (or designee) should inform the Referee that they may want a measurement to be taken if the outcome remains close.
- Once the Referee announces the ball count, that decision is final and any questions from the Captain (or designee) are too late.

- Captains that are actively playing must have a designee measure when this will affect their end play, unless they are called down by the designee.
- In the result of a tie; captains must declare end of play, and rollers. The team that ties the game picks the end for the roll and roller and then the other team declares their roller. Only two players are involved in the roll-off.

### **CONFERENCING:**

- The act of strategizing with the captain and players when play is not at that end; is allowed. **At no time may this distract other players or play on either court or affect the pace of play. Conferencing must occur away from the field of play.**
- Captains may discuss with players order of roll, throwing pallino and throwing ball away, during play.
- Active teammates while not on the court on the same end; can discuss play amongst themselves, strategy and order of roll.
- Once a player enters the court no discussion or direction with that player may take place.
- During any Tournament play a player may not be told where to roll a ball; except when being told to throw the ball away by the captain; during Mixer play instruction may take place.

### **14) REFEREE RESPONSIBILITY:**

Referee arrives 30 minutes before the game for the coin toss and discussions with the Captains.

Sets the Countdown Clock before each game or controls a timer (if used). Countdown clock should be set with F12/30 minutes and be running before game start.

Loudly calls the ball count at the end of each frame to both ends of the Court.

Note: This Referee decision is final. No exceptions. May suggest that Captains measure if a decision is close.

(Captains – you don't need to wait for that suggestion if you want a measurement you can ask for it. Always ask permission before stepping into the court).

All measurements are made using the can and string.

### **15) COIN TOSS:**

The Referee conducts the coin toss. The Home Team Captain calls heads or tails.

The winner of the coin toss chooses either the pallino or ball color.

Yellow balls have been added to assist our color-blind members. Before ball selection occurs the need for yellow balls must be declared. The Captain with the first choice of colors may choose red, green, or yellow. The other Captain must choose from the remaining colors, unless the yellow balls are required, in which case the other Captain must choose the yellow balls.

#### **16) START OF THE GAME:**

All games will start at the “clock end” of the courts.

The Referee controls the start by telling the pallino winner to throw the pallino. First player should be ready, in the court with pallino in hand.

The pallino must pass the midline and must not hit the back wall nor leave the court. If any of those conditions is not satisfied, then the pallino is returned by the Referee and is to be thrown by the opposing team.

Even if the first throw of the pallino is not valid, **the team that is awarded points or wins the flip at the start of the game, always throws the first ball.**

The player that sets the pallino does not have to roll the first ball.

#### **17) PLAY OF THE GAME:**

The ball closest to the pallino is ‘in’ and the opposing team throws and continues to throw until they throw an ‘in’ ball.

**An opposing ball which ties (but does not beat) the ‘in’ ball is not called ‘in’ and that team continues to throw until they throw an ‘in’ ball.**

If a ball hits the backboard without first hitting any other ball or the pallino, then that ball is dead and removed from the court.

**If the pallino is knocked out of the court, or bounces back in front of the center line, the frame is considered void and the team that started the frame will begin again at the opposite end of the court.**

Referees, players and captains must be mindful of the clock and continue pace of play consistent throughout the game. If a referee determines there is an effort to stall pace of play; a warning will be issued and with the second warning a point would be taken away from the violating team.

Step off the bocce court when it is not your turn to throw. Make exceptions for players who have trouble getting on and off the courts.

If and Act of God (ie. earthquake) or medical emergency occurs the clock may be stopped until it is safe to continue on that court.

**If a ball is knocked out of the court, it is considered “dead”. Same as when hitting the back wall.**

**The team winning the first game throws the first pallino in the second game.**



### **18) SCORING:**

Ball count includes the 'in' ball and any other same color balls that are closer than any opposing team ball. If at the **end** of a frame the closest ball of each team is equally close to the pallino (tied) **the frame ends in a tie and no points are scored.**

**Scoring Mistakes (such as the wrong score being posted or forgetting to put up a score from a previous frame) should be corrected by the two Captains resolving the issue between themselves without delaying the game. Before the end of the next frame scoring mistakes must be resolved.**

**The Referee has no responsibility for Score Keeping.**

### **19) CAPTAINS MEETING:**

Captains Meetings are scheduled by the Tournament Director at the beginning of the year and are published in the Bocce Event Calendar and in the Calendar section of the Villager.

The Tournament Director chairs the Captains Meeting. Match Schedule and Rules & Procedures are reviewed and early court booking for practice times are conducted during the Meeting. A Captain's attendance is highly preferred but a Captain may send a representative in case of a scheduling problem.

Declaration of yellow balls, based on medical need, must be declared at the captains meeting or one week before the first game and a "Y" will be placed on the roster. (This will allow opposing teams the chance to practice with yellow balls before game day.)

### **20) RESERVING A COURT FOR TOURNAMENT PRACTICE TIME:**

All scheduling for Villages Bocce Club is administered through YourCourts software. Prior to the captains meeting all teams must declare their captains and co-captains and team names. This must be entered into the YourCourts database.

Prior to booking times the captains should have consulted their teammates for availability.

After the captains meeting: captains will be given 72 hours to input their entire practice schedule into the software. This is a first come first serve basis

All teams are allowed a one hour practice per week. These practices must be entered under team practice, so as to not affect the individual player rights in that same week.

Games will be entered in the software by the tournament director and your courts manager.

Team practice is not allowed on Sunday's between 12 pm and 5pm. This is reserved for general resident play.

There are special events that may affect your typical time of play. These reservations may be made up to a year ahead, within the calendar year.

### **21) RAINY DAYS:**

In the case of rain, **both Captains will discuss** whether to call off the remainder of the match. If both Captains cannot agree, the Referee will decide if the remainder of the match is called off. If both Captains agree to continue, but the Referee decides to withdraw, then the Captains must agree to select a replacement to act as Referee.

If a match is called because of rain, the Home Team Captain is responsible for **rescheduling the match and arranging for a Referee** at a day and time **convenient to both teams, or both teams will forfeit the missing game(s)**. Any changes to the day of play should be sent to the Tournament Coordinator and/or Director.

### **Reserving a make-up RAIN GAME court:**

The Home Team Captain must notify the tournament coordinator or director of the need for a makeup game so they can assist with scheduling in your courts. If a game had already started, both Captains should note the score and time remaining, and resume the game with that score and time remaining. Rain delayed games should be completed as soon as possible and **must** be completed prior to the end of League play in the tournament.

### **22) PLAYOFFS (First week after League Play):**

The Tournament Director is responsible for creating the Playoff Schedule.

Typically, a total of 8 teams are entered into the Playoffs. If there are fewer than 8 League winners, then wild card winners are selected (based on having the most winning games during League Play).

Home teams and opponents for each Playoff game will be determined by a seeding bracket based on the total number of wins during League Play. The bracket will be as follows: 1 (home) vs. 8, 2 (home) vs. 7, 3 (home) vs. 6, and 4 (home) vs. 5. Any ties in determining position will be settled by the Tournament Director through a coin toss, unless it is the 8<sup>th</sup> place position. If two teams tie for 8<sup>th</sup> place then a tie breaker game will be played.

Winners of playoff games continue through the bracket.

The two winning teams from the semi-final will compete in the Championship game.

**23) CHAMPIONSHIP GAME:**

The Championship Game, when possible, should be held on the Wednesday morning following the semi-final round of the Playoffs to determine first and second places.

Photos will be taken and published in the Villager.

Prizes will be awarded to the first and second place winners.

APPENDIX 1

**BOCCE REFEREE RULES: FOR TOURNAMENT PLAY**

\*Know and refer to our bocce rules available on the website, yourcourts and in the cabinet.

\*Show up **30** minutes prior to the start of the game. Introduce yourself to the captains. Set clock for **30 mins** prior to game start then set to **40 mins** for game. Get paddles, measuring can and pointer, ask if yellow balls are needed prior to coin flip. The home team calls pallino or color of ball. Yellow balls are not guaranteed to a team unless they win the toss and choose them.

\*Any team player in a game can throw the pallino but does not have to throw the first ball.

\*Ask each captain whom the designated player will be to help measure or assist the referee with a close call. Measurements that affect the play of a captain must use a designee. The captain is excluded from the court if two others are designated. No one steps on the court unless the referee invites you.

\*Only 3 people on a court at a time which includes the referee.

\*There is a ten minute break between games. Set clock again to **10 mins** for practice then **40 mins** to play, once play has ended on both courts.

\*Watch that all players throw only two balls. If an errant ball disturbs other balls simply replace to the best of your ability.

\*After each game the team with the most points wins. All 8 balls must be thrown to account for score. If a roll off is needed, one ball will be thrown by each team. The last scoring team throws pallino and first ball and chooses an end by captain's choice. Choice must be made prior to throwing. No change can be made after pallino is thrown. closest to the pallino wins.

\*If the pallino is thrown even with only one second left on the clock the full frame will be played even if it is an errant ball.

\*Observe repeated infractions to rules (e.g., stepping over the green throw line, 3 balls thrown).

If two warnings have been given, the referee may remove the ball from scoring and the team will forfeit a point upon that third warning. replace any displaced balls. Absolutely no tolerance given to rudeness or outbursts given to any player or referee. Play with respect to all players. All challenges can be handled diplomatically between the captains and referee.

\*Substitutions of a roster player are only allowed at the beginning of a frame. No subbed-out player may return to that same game on either side but can play in

the next game, no switching sides in a game. In extreme emergencies, like one of only 5 players becoming seriously ill, then the subbed-out player may return. If this emergency moves a team to 3 players the game is forfeited.

Conferencing with active players is considered allowable as stated in rule 13 of Bocce Tournament Rules Document.

When the time allotted for the game runs out, and frame in process will be completed.

When time is running out; the pallino may be set as long as the game balls are not impeding the roll of the pallino.

Once play has completed on both courts and points have been awarded, the referee starts the 10 minute warmup clock.

### **BEST PRACTICES FOR REFEREEING**

- \*Use pointer to show where the pallino is located and/or colored ball that is in
- \*Wear a colored vest and use your pointer. use back up lanyard timers for the clock.
- \*For a more accurate view, stand across from the stopped pallino. not way in front or behind the pallino. allow positioning so your shadow does not disguise play.
- \*Get in court quickly to make a call if it is tight. if too close to call, ask captains if they would like to measure or you can decide yourself if you would like to measure
- \*Make quick decisive calls, keeping the game moving. clocks are only stopped due to an act of god or medical emergency on one or both courts.
- \*When making final frame calls, move the most obvious ball/s closest to pallino out of the way announcing that point with the movement. measure or make call as needed of remaining balls
- \*Pay attention to the game, don't chat with sideliners. Put your phone away and keep control of the game
- \*Always display paddle up throughout the game with appropriate **in** ball color facing throwing teams
- \*Do not measure with feet, stick, or anything other than the can and string
- \*After each frame is complete, announce clearly to both ends what the count is note: Referee's decision is final after a challenge, measure or consultation with captains. No exceptions.
- \*Captains must lodge a challenge on a scoring call quickly before balls are moved or it is too late. They should notice the ref of a pending challenge
- \*Absolutely no balls are allowed outside of the throwing area
- \*Coaching is no longer a term and has been replaced with conferencing. Limitations of this are defined in rule 13 of the tournament rules for bocce.
- \*At the conclusion of a game, the referee should place the paddle on the curb with the color up signifying who won the first game. This will be your reminder who has the pallino in game two.

APPENDIX 2

**MATCH SCORE SHEET**

**DATE OF MATCH** \_\_\_\_\_ **COURT#** \_\_\_\_\_

**(HOME) TEAM NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**OPPOSING TEAM NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**GAME #1**

**GAME #1 WINNING TEAM**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

**GAME #1 OPPOSING TEAM**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

**GAME #2**

**GAME #2 WINNING TEAM**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

**GAME #2 OPPOSING TEAM**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **SCORE** \_\_\_\_\_

**CAPTAINS SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

**CAPTAINS SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

**OFFICATING REFEREE'S  
NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3

### BASIC BOCCE COURT ETIQUETTE

1. Be polite and courteous to your teammates and opponents. When it is your turn to throw, be ready and do not delay.
2. Bocce is meant to be a sociable game, so just have fun. After a frame ends, help return the balls to the corresponding rack. Learn and use the scoring hand signals.
3. Step off the bocce court when it is not your turn to throw. Make exceptions for handicapped or elderly players who have trouble getting on and off the courts.
4. Do not pick up the balls until it is your turn to throw, leave them on the court or in the rack. When it is your turn to throw, you may pick up and hold two balls if it improves your balance. **NO BALLS** are to be taken off the court or placed on the umbrella table during play.
5. Do not step on the other court if a game is in progress.
6. Do not stand on the divider between the courts.
7. Do not sit on the tables at the ends of the courts.
8. Be considerate when someone is making a shot. Silence cell phones when you are near play. If you need to take a call; walk away from the field of play.
9. If you have non-resident guests (adults or children) you or an informed adult should be present at the courts to make sure these rules of etiquette are observed.
10. Do not leave it up to other residents to supervise your guests playing bocce. It is uncomfortable for everyone.
11. Record only your own score, unless opponents ask you to record their score. During tournaments do not touch or kick the balls until final measurements and points have been made and announced by the referee. If you accidentally move a ball during measuring, your team will be forced to forfeit the point since proper measurement can no longer be made.
12. If asked, be willing to referee. A referee determines the number of points scored by a team in a frame and lets all team players know the call.
13. Step back if you see that your shadow is falling on the court while a player is aiming and preparing to throw his/her ball.
14. Our scoreboard and bulletin board are very close to teams playing at the clock end of the courts. To avoid distracting players, please do not carry on conversations in that area during active games.